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THE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. P. DODDRIDGE, D. D.

VOLUME VI.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR,

CONTAINING THE FORMER PART OF

THE HISTORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,

AS RECORDED BY

THE FOUR EVANGELISTS,

DISPOSED IN THE

ORDER OF AN HARMONY.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Ει δε τις υπο τωνδε μη πασχη των λογων, υπο μονων αν των εν αδη δικαστηριων υπευθυνθειη.
SIMPLIC. in EPICTET. Proem.

NEW-YORK

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TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

MADAM,

I Most thankfully acknowledge the condescension of your Royal Highness in allowing me the honour of laying this work at your feet, and committing it to so august a protection; and humbly beg your favourable acceptance of it, as a most sincere, though inconsiderable, expression of the profoundest duty, and most cordial esteem.

Could I lay open to your Royal Highness all the secret sentiments of my heart, you would read there the most affectionate sense of that gracious Providence which conducted you hither, to instruct and adorn Great Britain by so amiable an example, as well as to bless it with a race of princes descended from the illustrious houses of Brunswick and Saxe-Gotha in so happy an union! Joyfully have I, long since, taken my part with thousands, in congratulating my country and your Royal Highness on this occasion, and acknowledging that wise and paternal care his Majesty hath therein expressed for the happiness of succeeding generations: but permit me, Madam, freely to add, that with regard to yourself, I rejoice not so much in this accession to your grandeur, as in the persuasion I have, that you are possessed of a mind so superior to it, as to render it in all its remotest consequences, what greatness is not always to its possessors, safe, honourable, and advantageous. Universal report leaves me no room to doubt, that even in this blooming age you are tenderly sensible of the shining dangers inseparable from

so high a rank; and that it appears to your princely wisdom chiefly desirable, on account of those distinguished advantages which it may give, of approving yourself the faithful servant of God, and the generous friend of the public.

Among the principal of these advantages, your Royal Highness will undoubtedly number the opportunity which this exalted station of life affords you of forming to early sentiments of religion and virtue the opening minds of your royal offspring; those dear pledges of the liberty and happiness of ages yet to come, on whose temper and character, so much of public glory to our nation, so much of private felicity to yet unformed families, will depend. We adore the great Disposer of all events, who hath lodged this important trust in so wise and so pious a hand; and it must argue a very irreligious, or a very careless temper, if any neglect earnestly to pray, that He who hath so graciously assigned it to you, may direct and prosper you in it. While you, Madam, during the tender years which most naturally fall under the care of a mother, are endeavouring to bless these lovely infants with an education like that which you received from the excellent principles your parents, may your Royal Highness, in a success like theirs, receive the joys you have given! May they arise and shine on the whole Protestant world, in the lustre of every royal virtue and every Christian grace, which can render them dear to God and to their country, and, to say all in a word, worthy their relation to the Prince and Princess of Wales, and to all the glorious line of remoter ancestors from which they spring!

I should esteem it one of the greatest blessings of my life, and should be able to relish the thought in the nearest views of death itself, if this humble present which I here offer to your Royal Highness might give you any assistance in these pious cares. If the kings of *Israel* were required, not only to *read the law of Moses all the days of their lives*, but to *write out a copy of it* with

with their own hand; it may reasonably be expected, that *Christian* princes should make the far more glorious *gospel of the Son of God* their daily study, that it may be their constant guide. And I persuade myself, Madam, that none of the fashionable amusements of the age will seem to you in any degree comparable to that rational and elevated pleasure, which you will find in pointing out to your happy charge, as they grow capable of such instructions, the resplendent example of Jesus, the Prince of heaven, and the King of glory; in tracing the marvellous and edifying circumstances of his life, as here described; and in urging their humble and dutiful regards to that Divine, yet condescending Redeemer; to whom your Royal Highness, with all those amiable virtues which render you the delight and boast of our nation, will thankfully ascribe your own hopes of being finally accepted by God, and sharing the joys of his eternal presence.

These hopes, Madam, are the grand supports of the human mind in those views, from which royalty and empire cannot shelter it. An awful Providence, which we must all long lament, did early write these admonitions to your Royal Highness in the dust of one of the best of Queens. The attention with which her late Majesty studied the sacred oracles, and the evidences of our holy religion, for which, even in her departing moments, she expressed so firm a regard, will, I hope, never be forgotten by any allied to her, or descended from her. Nor am I able, in all the overflowings of the most affectionate gratitude and duty which I now feel, to form a more important wish for that condescending Patroness to whom I am addressing, than (to borrow the words of the Hebrew Monarch) that *the testimonies of God may be her delight and her counsellors!* And I trust, Madam, that they are so; I trust that, conscious of a heart devoted to God, and supported by a well-grounded confidence in his favour, you are fixing your eyes on a celestial diadem, which shall sparkle with immortal glories, when the kingdoms of this earth

shall be known no more, and all its pageantry shall be passed away like a dream. May you at length, in a very distant moment, have a happy accession to that never-fading crown; and, after having long adorned the highest stations here with that amiable Prince, whose constant and endearing friendship is so much more to your Royal Highness than all the grandeur which can result from your relation to him, may you be both exalted to the superior glories of the heavenly kingdom!

I hope your Royal Highness will please to pardon me, that I have expressed myself with so much warmth and freedom, in a presence I so highly revere: but I should be most unworthy of the name and honour of a Christian Minister, if I were ever ashamed of sentiments like these; and the assiduity with which I have lately been sitting at the feet of my Divine Master, while commenting on these authentic memoirs of his life and history, hath inspired me with a veneration and ardour which it is not easy to repress. I am sensible, Madam, these are unfashionable strains on such an occasion; and it would have been easy to have filled many more pages than these with panegyric, on what I have read of your illustrious ancestors, and what I have heard from multitudes, of the charms of your Royal Highness's person and character; but I imagined that such hints as these were more suitable to that plainness and simplicity which at all times become a servant of Christ; and I flatter myself, that, to a person of your Royal Highness's penetration, they will not seem less expressive of that undissembled esteem and affectionate zeal, with which I am,

MADAM,

Your Royal Highness's

Most faithful, most dutiful,

And most obedient, humble Servant,

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

PREFACE.

I HAVE long been convinced, that if any thing can stop that progress of infidelity and vice, which every wise man beholds with sorrow and fear; that if any thing can allay those animosities, which (unnatural as they are) have so long inflamed us, and pained the heart of every generous *Christian;* in a word, that if any thing can establish the purity and order, the peace and glory of the church, or spread the triumphs of personal and domestic religion among us, it must be an attentive study of the word of God, and especially of the *New Testament;* that best of books, which, if read with impartiality and seriousness, under the influences of that blessed Spirit by whom it was inspired, would have the noblest tendency to enlighten and adorn the mind, and not only to touch, but to animate and transform the heart.

The station of life in which Divine Providence has placed me, rendered it peculiarly necessary for me to make these *sacred oracles* my principal study; and having, to my unspeakable delight and advantage, felt much of their energy, I long since determined that it should be the main business of my life as an author to illustrate them, and to lead my fellow-christians into a due regard for them, by endeavouring, in as plain and popular a manner as I could, to display their beauty, their spirit, and their use; and I thankfully acknowledge the goodness of God to me, in giving me health and spirits to finish so considerable a part of my design, though I have so much other business on my hands, and have been obliged to execute this in a much more laborious manner than I at first apprehended would have been requisite.

The *title* I have given to the work sufficiently explains its original design, which was chiefly to promote *family religion*, and to render the reading of the *New Testament* more pleasant and improving to those that wanted the benefit of a learned education, and had not opportunity or inclination to consult a variety of *commentators*. And I thought it proper still to retain the title of *The Family Expositor*, even when I had made some alteration in the plan; because that is still the leading view of the greater part of the work. In pursuit of this, I have given a large *paraphrase* on the sacred text, well knowing that this is the most agreeable and useful manner of explaining it to common readers, who hardly know how to manage annotations, especially when they are to be read to others. The chief objection against this way is, that when a whole verse, and much more when several verses are taken together (as they frequently are,) it requires a great attention, and in some places some considerable penetration, to trace the exact correspondence between the respective clauses of the *text* and the *paraphrase*. There are some performances of this kind in our own language, as well as in others, in which such liberties are taken, that I freely confess that, were it not for the initial references, or opposite column, I should not be able to guess from the *paraphrase* itself, what the *scripture* was which it pretended to explain. This must undoubtedly give the greatest advantage for disguise and misrepresentation; and where those glosses are read by themselves without the

scriptures

scriptures (which I know has been the case in some families,) it is really exchanging the *prophets* and *apostles* for *modern divines*. To prevent this intolerable evil, I have formed my *paraphrase* so, that it is impossible to read it without the *text*, having every where interwoven the *words of scripture* with it, and carefully distinguished them from the rest by the *Italic character*: so that every one may immediately see, not only the *particular clause* to which any explication answers, but also what are the *words* of the sacred *original*, and what merely the sense of a fallible man, who is liable, though in the integrity of his heart, to mislead his readers, and dares not attribute to himself the singular glory of having put off every prejudice, even while he would deliberately and knowingly allow none.

I thought it might be some additional improvement of this work, and some entertainment to the more accurate reader, to give the text in a *new version*; which I have accordingly done from the *original* with all the care I could. There are so few places in which the general sense will appear different from *our received translation*, that some will perhaps think this an unnecessary trouble: but I can by no means repent it, as it has given me an opportunity of searching more accurately into several beauties of expression which had before escaped me; and of making some alterations, which, though they may not be very material to the edification of men's souls, may yet in some degree do a farther honour to *scripture*; raising some of those ornaments which were before depressed; and sufficiently proving that several objections urged against it were entirely of an *English* growth: ends, which might yet more abundantly be answered by a *new version* of the *Old Testament*, which has suffered much more in *our translation*, as it is natural to suppose it must.

I thought it might also conduce to the usefulness of this exposition to digest the history of the *four evangelists* into one continued series, or, in other words, to throw it into the *order of an harmony*. By this means each story and discourse is exhibited with all its concurrent circumstances, as recorded by the sacred penmen; frequent repetitions are prevented; and a multitude of seeming oppositions are so evidently reconciled, as to supersede many objections, and render the very mention of them unnecessary. My reader will hardly imagine the pains that this part of the work has cost me, both in examining the *order* of the several *texts*, and collating the different accounts in each, in such a manner, that no one clause in any of the *evangelists* might be omitted, and yet the several passages to be inserted might make one connected sense, and, without any large addition, stand in a due grammatical order. I was the more sensible of this labour, as I laid it down for a maxim to myself, when I entered on this work, that I would study as much as possible to make it an original in all its parts. Accordingly, the first copy of it was drawn up with hardly any other assistance than that of the *Greek Testament*, which I endeavoured to *harmonize*, to *translate*, to *paraphrase* and to *improve*, just as if none had ever attempted any thing of that nature before me. Afterwards I was obliged to compare it with what others had done; and, as may easily be supposed, I found in many instances an agreement, and in many others a difference betwixt them and myself. Where we differed, I endeavoured impartially to examine the reasons on both sides; and where I have perceived myself indebted to any, for leading me into a more just and beautiful *version*, *explication* or *disposition*, than I had before chosen, I have generally, and, so far as I can recollect, universally, acknowledged it; unless where the hint came from some living friend, where such acknowledgment would not have been agreeable. There are, no doubt, many other instances in which the thoughts that seemed originally my own might be suggested by memory, though I knew not from whence they came; and a thousand more are so obvious, that one would suppose they must occur to every attentive reader, who has any genius and furniture for criticism. To have multiplied

plied references and quotations in such a case, would have been, I think, a very useless and burthensome piece of *pedantry*, and might (as I fear has been the case with *Pfeiffer* and *Wolfius*) have discouraged the reader from consulting any, in so great a crowd. I could not well brook the drudgery of *transcribing* the works of others, and should scorn the meanness of dressing myself up in *borrowed plumes*; but if any imagine me a *mere compiler*, I shall not be greatly concerned at their mistake, but say, with the modest and excellent *Mons. Rollin*, "*If the things themselves are good, it signifies very little whose they are**."

The *notes* are, at the desire of many friends, entirely added to my first scheme; and when I saw so many persons of learning and rank were pleased to encourage my undertaking, I thought it would be no unacceptable expression of my gratitude to them to insert several which I should otherwise have omitted. Some of them seemed absolutely necessary to justify the *version* and *paraphrase*, in what might seem most peculiar in it: several more refer to the *order*, and give my reasons for leaving the general track, where I have left it; and for not leaving it much oftener, where some very learned and ingenious *authors* have taken a great deal of pains (though, I persuade myself, with a very good intent) to lead us out of the way: and as several of these are *modern writers*, the *remarks* are such as do not commonly occur. The rest of the *notes* consist, either of some observations on the beauty and force of various passages, which I do not remember to have seen elsewhere; or of references to, and observations upon, considerable writers, whether they be or be not professed *expositors of scripture*, who seem in the most masterly manner to examine or to illustrate and confirm the sense I have given. These are generally but very short; because it would have been quite foreign to my purpose, and utterly inconsistent with my scheme, to have formed them into large *critical essays*: but I hope they may be some guide to *young students*, who, if they have libraries at hand, are in great danger of being *lost in a wood*, where, I am sorry to say it, they will find a multitude of *prickly and knotty shrubs*, and in comparison but few *pleasant and fruitful trees*. It has appeared to me an office of real and important friendship to gentlemen in this station of life, to endeavour to select for them the most valuable passages which occur in reading, and to remit them thither, not only for the *illustration* of *scripture*, but also for their direction in studying the *evidences* and *contents* both of *natural* and *revealed religion*. This I have done with great care and labour in a pretty large *work*, which perhaps may be published after my death, if surviving friends should judge it proper. To that I have generally referred those citations which relate to *polemical divinity*; and at present only add that, with regard to these *notes*, I have endeavoured to render them easy and entertaining, even to an *English* reader; and for that purpose have cautiously excluded *quotations* from the *learned languages*, even where they might have served to illustrate customs referred to, or *words* to be explained. That deficiency may be abundantly made up by the perusal of *Elsner*, *Albert*, *Bos*, *Wolfius*, *Raphelius*, *Fortuita Sacra*, &c †; books which I cannot but

* Que m'importe d'ou il soit, pourvu qu'il se trouve utile.—*Roll. Man. d'enseign*, vol. i. p. 75.

† As some of the books mentioned above are not very common among us, it may not be improper to insert their titles, viz.

Jacobi Elsner. Obrervat. Sacræ, 2 vol. 8vo. *Traject. ad Rhen.* 1720.
Alberti Observ. Philolog. Lugd. Bat. 1725.
Lamberti Bos Exercitat. Philolog. Franek. 1700
———— *Animadvers. Franek.* 1715.
———— *Observat. Miscell. Leovard.* 1731.
Raphelii Annotat. Philol. in Nov. Test. ex Xenophonte, Polybio, & Herodoto collectæ, 3 tom. *Lunen.* 1731.
Wolfii Curæ Philolog. & Criticæ, 4to. *Hamb.* 1725.

recommend

recommend to my *young friends*, as proper not only to ascertain the sense of a variety of words and phrases, which occur in the *apostolic writings*; but also to form them to the most useful method of studying the *Greek classics*, those great masters of solid sense, elegant expression, just lively painting, and masculine eloquence, to the neglect of which I cannot but ascribe that enervate, dissolute, and puerile manner of writing, which is growing so much on the present age, and will probably consign so many of its productions to speedy oblivion.

The *improvement* of each *section* is entirely of a practical nature, and generally consists of a pressing exhortations, and devout meditations, grounded on the general design, or on some particular passages, of the *section* to which they are annexed. They are all in an *evangelical strain*, and they could not with any propriety have been otherwise. I am well aware that this manner is not much in the present taste, and I think it at once a sad instance and cause of our degeneracy that it is not. If it be necessary that I should offer any *apology*, it must in short be this: I have with all possible attention and impartiality considered first the general evidences of the *truth of Christianity*, and then those of the *inspiration* of the *New Testament*, which seems to me inseparably connected with the former; and, on the whole, am in my conscience persuaded of both, and have been confirmed in that *conviction* by the most laboured attempts to overthrow them. It seems a necessary consequence of this *conviction* (and I am astonished it should not be more generally attended to), that we are with the humblest submission of mind to form our religious notions on this plan, and to give up the most darling maxims which will not bear the test of it.

I should think an impartial reader must immediately see, and every judicious critic be daily more confirmed in it, that the *New Testament* teaches us to conceive of *Christ*, not as a generous *Benefactor* only, who, having performed some actions of heroic virtue and benevolence, is now retired from all intercourse with our world, so that we have no more to do with him than to preserve a grateful remembrance of his character and favours; but that he is to be considered as an ever-living and ever-present *friend*, with whom we are to maintain a daily commerce by faith and prayer, and from whom we are to derive those supplies of divine grace, whereby we may be strengthened for the duties of life, and ripened for a state of perfect holiness and felicity. This is evident not only from particular passages of *scripture*, in which he is described as *always with* his church (Mat. xxviii. 20.) as present *wherever two or three are assembled in his name* (Mat. xviii. 20), as *upholding all things by the word of his power* (Heb. i. 3), and as *Head over all to his church* (Eph. i. 22), but indeed from the whole scope and tenor of the *New Testament*. These views are therefore continually to be kept up; and for any to pretend that this is a *round-about method* (as some have presumed to call it,) and that men may be led to virtue, the great end of all, by a much plainer and more direct way, seems to me only a vain and arrogant attempt *to be wiser than God himself*; which therefore must in the end appear to be *folly*, with whatever subtlety of argument it may be defended, or with whatever pomp of rhetoric it be adorned.

The *New Testament* is a book written with the most consummate knowledge of human nature; and though there are a thousand latent beauties in it, which it is the business and glory of true criticism to place in a true point of light, the *general sense* and *design* of it is plain to every honest reader even at the very first perusal. It is evidently intended to bring us to *God* through *Christ*, in an humble dependence on the communications of his sanctifying and quickening *Spirit*; and to engage us to a course of faithful and universal obedience, chiefly from a grateful sense of the riches of divine grace

grace manifested to us in the *gospel*. And though this scheme is indeed liable to abuse, as every thing else is, it appears to me plain in fact, that it has been and still is the grand instrument of reforming a very degenerate world; and according to the best observations I have been able to make on what has passed about me, or within my own breast, I have found, that, in proportion to the degree in which this *evangelical scheme* is received and relished, the interest of true virtue and holiness flourishes, and the mind is formed to manly devotion, diffusive benevolence, steady fortitude, and, in short, made *ready to every good word and work*. To this therefore I am determined, at all adventures, to adhere; nor am I at all ashamed or afraid of any scorn which I may encounter in such a cause; and I would earnestly exhort, and entreat, all my *brethren* in the *Christian ministry* to join with me, as well knowing *to whom* we have *committed our souls*; and cheerfully hoping, that He, by whom we have hitherto, if faithful in our calling, been supported and animated, will at length *confess* us *before the presence of his Father and the holy angels* in *that day*, when it will be found no dishonour to the greatest and wisest of the children of men to have listed themselves under the *banner* of the *cross*, and constantly and affectionately to have kept their divine Leader in view.

I cannot flatter myself so far, as to imagine that I have fallen into no mistakes, in a work of so great compass and difficulty; but my own conscience acquits me of having designedly misrepresented any *single passage* of *scripture*, or of having written *one line* with a purpose of inflaming the hearts of *Christians* against each other. I should esteem it one of the most aggravated crimes to make the life of the gentle and benevolent *Jesus* a vehicle to convey such a poison. Would to God that all the *party-names*, and *unscriptural phrases* and *forms*, which have divided the *Christian world*, were forgot; and that we might agree to sit down together, as humble loving *disciples*, at the feet of *our common Master*, to hear *his word*, to imbibe *his Spirit*, and to transcribe *his life* in our own!

I hope it is some token of such growing candour on one side, as I am sure it should be an engagement to cultivate it on the other, that so many of the reverend clergy of the establishment, as well as other persons of distinction in it, have favoured this undertaking with their encouragement. To them, and, all my other friends, I return my most hearty thanks; and shall remember that the regard they have been pleased to express to it, obliges me to pursue the remainder of the work with the utmost care and application; and earnestly entreat the farther assistance of their prayers, that it may be conducted in a manner subservient to the honour of the gospel and the edification of the church.

In these volumes I have been desirous to express my gratitude to the *subscribers*, by sparing nothing in my power which might render the work acceptable to them; both with respect to its contents and its form. The consequence of this is, that it hath swelled to a number of sheets, which by more than a third part exceeds what I promised in the *proposals*; which, though at a great expence, I chose to permit, rather than I would either sink the paper and character beneath the *specimen*, or omit some remarks in the *notes* which appeared to me of moment, and rose in my mind while I was transcribing them. But I hope this large addition to what was at first expected will excuse my not complying with the importunity of some of my friends, who have requested that I would introduce this work with a *dissertation* on such points of *Jewish antiquity* as might be serviceable for the fuller understanding the *New Testament*, or with a *discourse* on its *genuineness, credibility, inspiration* and *use*.

As to the first of these (a compendious view of such articles of *Jewish antiquity* as may be a proper introduction to the critical study of scripture,)

I do with great pleasure refer the generality of readers and young students to the *general preface* to the *Prussian Testament*, published by *Mess. L'Enfant* and *Beausobre*; which preface was some years since translated into *English*, and suits the purpose better than any thing I have seen within so small a compass. As to the latter, I purpose, if God permit, when I have finished the second volume, to publish with another edition of my *Three Sermons on the Evidences of Christianity*, two or three discourses more on the *inspiration* of the *New Testament*, and on its *usefulness*, especially that of the *Evangelical History*; to which I may perhaps add some farther directions for the most profitable manner of reading it. At present I shall only add, that daily experience convinces me more and more, that as a thousand charms discover themselves in the works of *nature*, when attentively viewed with glasses, which had escaped the naked eye; so our admiration of the *holy scriptures* will rise in proportion to the accuracy with which they are studied.

As for these histories and discourses of Christ, I may say of them, with far greater justice, what *Simplicius* doth of *Epictetus*, in the passage of which my *motto* is a part, and which I shall conclude my preface: "The words themselves are generally plain and intelligible: but I have endeavoured thus to unfold them, that my own heart might be more deeply impressed with the spirit and certainty of them; and that others, who have not themselves equal advantage for entering into it, might be guided into their true interpretation. But if, on the whole, any reader continue entirely unaffected with them, there is little prospect that any thing will reclaim him till he come to the *tribunal of the invisible world**."

* Και εισι μεν οι λογοι σαφεις· ου χειρον δε ισως, κατα το δυνατον διαπτυσσειν αυτους. Ο τε γαρ γραφων, συμπαθεστερος τε αμα προς αυτους γενησεται, και της αλεθειας αυτων κατανοητικωτερος· και των φιλομαθων οι προς λογους ασυνηθεστεροι, ισως εξουσι τινα χειραγωγιαν εκ της ερμενειας αυτων.— Ει δε τις υπο τουτων μη πασχη των λογων, υπο μονων αν των εν αδου δικαστηριων υπευθυνθειη.

Northampton, Nov. 27, 1738. Simplic. in Epictet. *Proem.*

Directions for reading the Family Expositor.

AS to the manner of reading this book in families, I would advise as follows:—First, Let the passage of Scripture be read from the *common translation* in the inner column, unless the family have their Bibles before them: then read the *new version* by itself, which is interwoven with the *paraphrase*, but distinguished by the *italic character*; and then the *paraphrase* and *improvement*.

As for the *notes*, I should advise the person who officiates to select such as are of the most general concern, and read them after the paragraph to which they belong; for it is not so agreeable to interrupt the sense by introducing them before it is completed. Other *notes* may perhaps be more fitly made matter of conversation afterwards; but this is referred to the prudence of particular persons, who will judge with a regard to the state and character of the families in question.

In reading the *compound text* it may be observed, that the words of the several *evangelists* are distinguished by *crotchets*, thus [ ]; and the *clauses* included within them are always marked with the name of the *evangelist* from whom they are taken, unless a *single text* only be added at the end of the verse to which they must of course belong; or, where *more texts* than one are added, the *crotchets* which have nothing to distinguish them belong to the first.

I am pleased to think with how much ease any attentive reader will distinguish the *text* itself from the *paraphrase* in consequence of the extraordinary care which hath been taken to keep the work in that particular remarkably correct; for which I am obliged to pay my public and most thankful acknowledgments to my worthy brother and friend, the Reverend Mr. GODWIN, who generously undertook the great trouble, not only of revising each *sheet* as it came from the press, but also of inspecting the *manuscript* before it went thither, and of making several important alterations in it very much for the better; of which I should have been ready to have given a more particular account if his modesty and goodness would have permitted it.

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* Acts i.—2, 3. † Acts i. 4—12.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

THE FORMER PART OF THE HISTORY OF CHRIST, AS RECORDED BY THE EVANGELISTS.

SECT. I.

St. Luke's preface to his history, dedicated to Theophilus, a Christian friend, for whose comfort and establishment he was particularly concerned. Luke I. ver. 1—4.

LUKE I. ver. 1.

FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

2 Even as they delivered

LUKE I. Verse 1.

SECT. i.

I. 1.

WHEREAS many have undertaken[a] *to compose the history*[b] *of those* important *facts which have been confirmed among us* Christians *with the fullest* and most satisfactory *evidence*[c], as the great foundation of our common faith; and since some of these historians have written, not on their own personal knowledge, but *as they* (whether apostles or others) *have transmitted them*

[a] *Whereas many have undertaken.*] This must refer to some histories of the life of Christ which are now lost; for Matthew and Mark, the only evangelists which can be supposed to have written before Luke, could not with any propriety be called *many;* and of these two, Matthew at least wrote from personal knowledge, not the testimony of others. One must readily conclude the books referred to are lost, as none of the apocryphal gospels now extant, published particularly by Fabricius, (in his Codex. Apoc. Nov. Test.) or Mr. Jones, (in his history of the Canon) can with any shadow of reason pretend to equal antiquity with this of St. Luke. But I cannot, with Ambrose and Epiphanius, suppose that the evangelist here intends the gospels of Basilides, Cerinthus, and some other early heretics; since he seems to allow these histories, whatever they were, to have been at least honestly written, according to information received from the most capable judges. And it is strange that Eusebius should imagine the words are intended as a severe censure on the now unknown compilers of these histories, whoever they were. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 24.

[b] *To compose the history.*] *To set forth in order a declaration* is so antiquated a phrase, that it would hardly be understood any where but here; at least I am sure none could, by reading it, so much as guess at the elegance and propriety of St. Luke's words, ἀναταξασθαι διηγησιν, which may more literally, and, I think, far more justly be rendered, *to compose a history:* and I doubt not, but our English word *compose* may express as much regularity in the order of facts as the evangelist meant to intimate.

[c] *Confirmed among us with the fullest evidence.*] I think πεπληροφορημενων is rather to be understood as referring to the *fulness* of that *evidence* with which the facts were *attended,* than to the *confidence* with which they were *believed.* This seems most honourable to the gospel; but as I know the word is ambiguous, and often used in the latter sense, I have chose to express that also in the paraphrase. Compare 2 Tim. iv. 5—17. Gr.

SECT. i.

Luke I. 2.

them to us, who were themselves *from the beginning* of Christ's ministry *eye-witnesses* of what passed, *and* in proof of the sincerity of their testimony courageously became *ministers of the word*[d], that is, of the gospel, amidst the greatest
3 opposition; *I also having accurately traced all* these *things*[e] *from their first rise*[f], even from the very conception of John the Baptist, who was the forerunner of our Lord, *have thought it proper to write an orderly account of them*[g]: and I chuse to inscribe it *to thee, O most noble Theophilus*[h]; because, though thou art already, in the general, acquainted with them, yet I cannot but be
4 concerned *that thou mayest* more fully and circumstantially *know the* exact and *certain truth of those things in which thou hast* formerly *been instructed*[i] by those who were the happy instruments of initiating thee into the Christian faith; and I am persuaded thou wilt be greatly confirmed in it by the attentive perusal of that history with which I here present thee.

livered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word:

3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.

IMPROVE-

[d] *Of the word.*] Some have conjectured that λογος, *the word*, here signifies Christ, as in the beginning of St. John's gospel: perhaps it may; but I did not think it so evident as to venture fixing it to that sense.

[e] *Having accurately traced all these things.*] The original, παρηκολουθηκοτι πασιν ακριβως, plainly signifies that accuracy of investigation on which the perfect understanding of his subject was built.

[f] *From their first rise.*] Some very pious and learned writers have pleaded this text as an argument for the inspiration of St. Luke's gospel, and consequently of the rest, because the word ανωθεν sometimes signifies *from above*, or *from heaven*; as it plainly doth, John iii. 31. Jam. i. 17. iii. 15, 17. But Luke so evidently uses it in the sense here given, Acts xxvi. 5. and that sense is so common elsewhere, and seems so absolutely necessary in this connection with παρηκολουθηκοτι, that I cannot think this text at all to the purpose. The argument I mention is one of those which, like pieces of superfluous armour, encumber rather than defend; and the more I am concerned about the conclusion here or elsewhere, the more cautious shall I always be, that I may not draw it from such premises.

[g] *To write an orderly account of them,* καθεξης σοι γραψαι.] It is chiefly on the authority of this clause that M. Le Clerc, and many other modern harmonizers have thought (as Beza also did) that all the other gospels are to be reduced to the order of Luke, wherever they differ from it: a conclusion which I apprehend, for reasons that shall afterwards be given at large, to be an occasion of many errors, and particularly injurious to the character of St. Matthew. I would only here observe that the foundation of it is very precarious; since it is evident this evangelist might, with great propriety, be said to have given *an orderly account* of the history of Christ, as the leading facts are in their due series, though some particulars are transposed.

[h] *O most noble Theophilus.*] That Theophilus is the name of a particular person eminent in the church in those early days, and not (as Salvian thought it) a general title applicable to every Christian as a lover of God, Dr. Whitby, after many others, hath abundantly proved. What his rank in life was, we do not indeed certainly know; but it seems that it was pretty considerable; for Κρατιστε was then, as *Excellency* among us is, a title of honour and respect usual in addressing noble personages (see Acts xxiii. 26. xxiv. 3. xxvi. 25.) and it might with some peculiar propriety be applied here, as Theophilus was so worthy the name he bore, which signifies a true *lover of God.*

[i] *Hast been instructed,* περι ων κατηχηθης.] The word doth with great accuracy express the instructions given to those who were training up for an admission to the Christian church, whose name of *catechumens* was, as it is well known, derived from hence, and applied without any particular regard to the age of the persons concerned. Compare Acts xviii. 25. Rom. ii. 18. I endeavour to express this in the paraphrase; but it would be very improper to use the English word which most literally answers to the Greek, because that is now almost wholly appropriated to children.

a *The*

IMPROVEMENT. SECT. i.

LET us humbly adore the Divine Goodness, that facts of so great importance as these now to be laid before us were not left to the uncertainty of oral tradition, but delivered to the church in writing, by persons who had so many opportunities of learning the truth, and have given such full proof of their integrity in relating it.—Let us be thankful that we have not only one such history, but that several undertook this excellent and necessary work, by whose united testimony the whole is confirmed; while it is also illustrated by the variety of their narrations, each inserting some considerable circumstance which the rest have omitted. Let us rejoice in that providential care which hath preserved this invaluable treasure through so many succeeding ages, and some of them periods of the grossest darkness and the hottest persecution. Ver. 2 1

While we study this *orderly series* of sacred story, let us be concerned that our faith may be established by it, and our other graces proportionably advanced; maintaining a continual dependance on that blessed Spirit, by whose instruction it was written to lead us into wise and pious reflections upon it. 4

To conclude; from the care which this holy evangelist expresseth for the edification and comfort of his friend Theophilus, let us learn to regard it as one of the most important offices of friendship to labour for the spiritual advantage of each other; by endeavouring not only to awaken and instruct those that are entirely unacquainted or unaffected with divine things, but also, as we have opportunity, to confirm the faith and quicken the zeal of the most established Christians with whom we converse. Happy the men whose tongues and whose pens are employed in so good a work: may they never, in the remotest ages, fail of some *excellent Theophilus* to welcome and encourage their pious attempts! 5

SECT. II.

St. John begins his gospel with a very sublime and emphatical account of the deity and incarnation of Christ; and of those glorious and important purposes for which he condescended to appear among us in the human nature. John I. 1—14.

JOHN I. 1.

IN the beginning was the word, and the word

JOHN I. 1.

IN the beginning, before the foundation of the world, or the first production of any created being, a glorious person *existed*, who (on account of the perfections of his nature and his being in time the medium of divine manifestations to us) may properly be called *the word* of God[a]. *And the*

[a] *The word* of God.] The Greek *logos* is now become so familiar to an English ear, that I doubt not but most of my readers would have understood me had I retained it in

SECT. ii.

John 1. 1.

the word was originally *with God* the Father of all; so that to him the words of Solomon might justly be applied, Prov. viii. 30. "He was by him as one brought up with him, and was daily his delight." Nay, by a generation which none can declare, *and* an union which none can fully conceive, *the word was* himself *God* [b], that is, possessed of a nature truly and properly divine. I repeat it again, that the condescension of his incarnation may be more attentively considered, *this* divine [*word*] *was in the* very *beginning with God*, and, by virtue of his most intimate union with him, was possessed of infinite glory and felicity. And when it pleased God to begin his work of creation, *all things* in the

word was with God, and the word was God.

2. The same was in the beginning with God.

3. All things were made by him; and without

in my translation; which, on account of the singularity of the idea here signified by it, I should have done had I not feared it might have been unintelligible to a few at least, and so have impaired the pleasure they might find in so excellent a passage. I know that some of the fathers render *logos*, *reason*, as M. Le Clerc doth; though I apprehend they mean it in a very different sense from him, who seems to understand it only as a strong eastern phrase, to signify the consummate wisdom of the gospel scheme. See his Harmony, p. 44. But this will entirely enervate and destroy the sense of ver. 14. as well as of those texts which speak of Christ's *coming out from God, enjoying glory with him before the world was*, &c.

[b] *The word was God.*] I know how eagerly many have contended that the word GOD is used here in an inferior sense; the necessary consequence of which is (as indeed some have expressly avowed it) that this clause should be rendered *The word was a god*, that is, a kind of inferior deity, as *governors* are called *gods*. See John x. 34, and 1 Cor. viii. 5. But it is impossible he should here be so called merely as a *governor*, because he is spoken of as existing before the production of any creatures whom he could govern: and it is to me most incredible that, when the Jews were so exceeding averse to idolatry, and the Gentiles so unhappily prone to it, such a plain writer as this apostle should lay so dangerous a stumbling-block on the very threshold of his work, and represent it as the Christian doctrine, that *in the beginning* of all things there were *two gods*, one supreme and the other subordinate: a difficulty which, if possible, would be yet farther increased by recollecting what so many ancient writers assert, that this gospel was written with a particular view of opposing the Cerinthians and Ebionites (see *Iren.* l. i. c. 26; l. iii. c. 11; *Euseb. Eccl. Hist.* l. vi. c. 14), on which account a greater accuracy of expression must have been necessary. There are so many instances in the writings of this apostle, and even in this chapter (see ver. 6, 12, 13, 18,) where Θεος, without the article, is used to signify *God* in the highest sense of the word, that it is something surprising such a stress should be laid on the want of that article, as a proof that it is used only in a subordinate sense.—On the other hand, to conceive of *Christ* as a *distinct* and *co-ordinate God*, would be equally inconsistent with the most express declarations of *scripture*, and far more irreconcileable with *reason*. Nothing I have said above can, by any means, be justly interpreted in such a sense: and I here solemnly disclaim the least intention of insinuating one thought of that kind, by any thing I have ever written, here or elsewhere.—— The order of the words in the original (Θεος ην ο λογος), is such, that some have thought the clause might more exactly be translated, *God was the word*. But there are almost every where so many instances of such a construction as our version supposes, that I chose rather to follow it than to vary from it, unnecessarily, in this important passage.—I am deeply sensible of the sublime and mysterious nature of the doctrine of *Christ's deity*, as here declared; but it would be quite foreign to my purpose to enter into a large discussion of that great foundation of our faith; it has often been done by much abler hands. It was, however, matter of conscience with me, on the one hand, thus strongly to declare my belief of it; and, on the other, to leave it as far as I could in the simplicity of scripture expressions. I shall only add in the words, or at least in the sense of Bishop Burnet, "That had not St. John and the other

without him was not any thing made that was made.

the whole compass of nature *were made by him*[c], even by his almighty word; *and without him was not* any thing *made*, not *so much as one single being*[d], whether among the noblest or the meanest of God's various works. *That* fulness of power, wisdom, and benignity, *which was in him, was* the fountain of *life*[e] to the whole creation: *and* it si in particular our concern to remember

SECT. ii.

John l. 4.

4. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

other apostles thought it a doctrine of great importance in the gospel scheme, they would rather have waved than asserted and insisted upon it, considering the critical circumstances in which they wrote." See *Burnet on the Articles*, page 40.

[c] *All things were made by him.*] It would be the work of a treatise rather than a note to represent the Jewish doctrine of the creation of all things by the divine *Logos*; to which (rather than the platonic) there may be some reference here. They who have no opportunity of examining the original authors, may see what those learned men have said, to whom Dr. A. Taylor refers in his *Treatise on the Trinity*, p. 258; to which add *Dr. Pearson on the Creed*, p. 118; *Dr. Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 565, &c. fol. and *Dr. Watts's Dissertation on the Trinity*, No. IV. § 3.—There is, however, a remarkable passage I shall mention to this purpose as a specimen of the rest; and the rather because it is omitted in most of the collections I have seen on this head, and not fully cited and explained in what I take to be its exact sense in any. Philo Judæus (*de Profug.* p. 465.) speaking of the *cherubims on the mercy seat* as symbolical representations of what he calls *the creating and governing powers*, makes this additional reflection: "The divine Word (*Logos*) is above these, of whom we can have no idea by the sight or any other sense; he being himself *the image of God*, the eldest of all intelligent beings, sitting nearest to Him who is truly THE HOLY ONE, there being no distance between them:" (alluding, I suppose, to the form of those *ancient chariots* where, as in the *chairs* we use upon the road, the driver sat close to the person driven; which was not the case in all: compare Acts viii. 38. "And therefore he (that is, God) says, *I will speak unto thee from the mercy seat between the two cherubims*; thereby representing the *Logos* as the charioteer by whom the motion of these powers is directed; and himself who speaks to him as the rider (or person carried) who commands the charioteer how he is to manage the reins." Ο δε υπερανω τουτων (scil. δυναμεως ποιητικης και βασιλικης) ΛΟΓΟΣ ΘΕΙΟΣ, εις οραθην ουκ ηλθεν Ιδεαν, αλε μηδενι των κατ' αισθησιν εμφερης ων, αλλ' αυτος εικων υπαρχων Θεου, των νοητων απαξ απαντων ο πρεσβυτατος, ο εγγυτατος, μηδενος οντος μεθοριου διαστηματος, ΤΟΥ ΜΟΝΟΥ ο εστιν αψευδως αφιδρυμενος. Λεγεται γαρ, Λαλησω σοι ανωθεν του Ιλαστηριου ανα μεσον των δυοιν Χερουβειμ· ωσθ' ηνιοχον μεν ειναι των δυναμεων τον ΛΟΓΟΝ, εποχον δε τον λαλουντα, επικε' ευομενον τω ηνιοχω τα προς ωρθην του παντος ηνιοχησιν. I insert this as a key to a great many other passages in Philo; and shall only mention one more (*De Agricult.* p. 195) where he represents God as "governing the whole course of nature, both in heaven and earth, as the great Shepherd and King, by wise and righteous laws; having constituted his unerring Word, his only begotten Son, to preside as his viceroy over his holy flock:" for the illustration of which he quotes those remarkable words, Exod. xxiii. 20, though in a form something different from our reading and version, "*Behold I am; I will send my angel before thy face to keep thee in the way.*" Γ'ην και υδωρ κ. τ. λ. — — τα μεν θνητα, τα δε θεια, (a remarkable distribution) ως ποιμην και βασιλευς ο Θεος αγει κατα δικην και νομον, προστησαμενος τον ορθον αυτου ΛΟΓΟΝ πρωτογονον υιον, ος την επιμελειαν της ιερας ταυτης αγελης, οια τι μεγαλου βασιλεως υπαρχος, διαδεξεται. Και γαρ ειρηται που, Ιδου εγω ειμι, αποστελω αγγελον μου εις προσωπον σου φυλαξαι σε εν τη οδω.

[d] *Not so much as one single being.*] There is an emphasis in the words ουδε εν, which I thought it proper to express in the version, than which nothing can be more literal.

[e] *That which was in him was life.*] The most ancient fathers that quote this text so generally join the words ο γεγονεν with this fourth verse, that I cannot but apprehend this to be the true reading. (See *Dr. Mill's Proleg.*) But if any think it improbable that γεγονε should have different senses here and in the third verse, they will please to observe that the full sense of our version is expressed in the paraphrase, and that the alteration here made is of very small importance. That the Heathens sometimes speak of their deities and heroes as the light and life of mankind, *Elsner* has shewn on this text.

[f] *Did*

SECT. ii.

remember that *the life* which was in him *was the light of men*, as all the light of reason and revelation was the effect of his energy on the mind.

John I. 5. *And the light* long shone in the heathen world, and under the dispensation of Moses; and it still *shineth in darkness*, even on the minds of the most ignorant and prejudiced part of mankind; *and* yet *the darkness* was so gross that it opposed its passage; and such was the prevailing degeneracy of their hearts, that they *did not apprehend it*[f], or regard its dictates in such a manner as to secure the blessings to which it would have led them.

5. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.

6 As this was the case for many ages, the Divine Wisdom was pleased to interpose in these latter days by a clearer and fuller discovery: and for this purpose, *a man, whose name was John*, afterwards called the Baptist, *was sent* as a messenger *from God;* of whose miraculous conception and important ministry a more particular account is 7 elsewhere given: But here it may be sufficient to observe in general that though he was himself, in an inferior sense, "a burning and shining light," (compare John v. 35.) yet *he came* only under the character of a servant, and *for a witness that he might testify concerning* Christ *the* true *light, that all* who heard his discourses *might by his means* be engaged to *believe* and fol- 8 low that divine illumination. And accordingly he most readily confessed that *he* himself *was not that light, but* only [*came*] *to bear witness con-* 9 *cerning it. The true light* of which he spake *was* Christ[g], even *that* Sun of righteousness and Source of truth *which, coming into the world, enlighteneth every man*[h], dispersing his beams, as it

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John;

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe.

8 He was not that light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that light.

9 *That* was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

f *Did not apprehend it,* κατελαβεν.] It might not seem so strange that the world did not fully comprehend the *spiritual*, since it certainly doth not fully comprehend the *material* light, nor indeed any of the most familiar objects it discovers: but the word is capable of other senses, and is sometimes used for *apprehending* or laying hold of a thing, 1 Cor. ix. 24. Phil. iii. 12, 13. and sometimes for *perceiving* it, Acts iv. 13. x. 34. Compare Acts xiv. 17. xvii. 25. Rom. i. 20. which all illustrate the evangelist's assertion.

g *The true light was* Christ.] The original yet more clearly expresses the antithesis between this and the former verse: I have endeavoured to follow it in my version without supposing αυτος understood here to answer to εκεινος there. I cannot but think the conjecture of the learned Heinsius very elegant, that the ην at the beginning of this verse might belong to the end of the former: the exact construction then would be, *He*, viz. John *was not that light, but he was* (that is, he existed and came) *that he might bear witness to that light: the true light, &c. was in the world, &c.* See *Heinsius in loc.*

h *Which coming into the world, enlighteneth every man.*] So I chuse to render it, though I acknowledge that our version may be consistent with the truth, and that it most exactly suits the order of the words in the original; but the other is also very grammatical, φως ερχομενον εις τον κοσμον, and suggests an idea more distinct from ver. 4

Not

SECT. ii.

it were from one end of the heavens to the other, to the Gentile world, which was in midnight darknesss, as well as to the Jews, who enjoyed but a kind of twilight. *He was in the world* in a human form; *and* though *the world was made by him*[i], *yet the world knew* and acknowledged *him not.* Yea, *he came into his own* [*territories*], even to the Jewish nation, which was under such distinguished obligations to him, and to whom he had been so expressly promised as their great Messiah; *yet his own* [*people*] *did not receive him*[k] as they ought; but, on the contrary, treated him in the most contemptuous and ungrateful manner. *Nevertheless* the detriment was theirs, and it was indeed unspeakably great to them; for *to as many as received him, and* by a firm and lively faith *believed on his name,* [*even*] *to* all of *them,* without any exception of even the poorest or the vilest, *he granted the* glorious *privilege of becoming the sons of God;* that is, he adopted them into God's family, so that they became entitled to the present immunities and the future eternal inheritance of his children. And they *who* thus believed on him *were* possessed of these privileges, *not* in consequence of their being *born of blood,* of their being descended from the loins of the holy patriarchs, or sharing in circumcision and

John I. 10.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Not to urge that the phrase of *coming into the world* is with peculiar emphasis used of *Christ,* and especially under the notion of a *light.* Compare John xii. 46. *I am come a light into the world.* John iii. 19. *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world.*

[i] *The world was made by him.*] Some have supposed this particularly levelled against the Gnostics, who maintained that the world was made by an evil genius; and that the God of the Old Testament and the New were different and contrary persons. It is certain that Irenæus, and several others of the fathers, with great propriety have urged this text against that mad notion. Eusebius exposes these wretches in a very just and lively manner, and makes use of words which, if he had been our contemporary, might have seemed directly levelled at a late unhappy writer, who strangely took it into his head to call himself, *The moral philosopher.* But, alas! every succeeding age has had its *moral philosophers,* who have attempted to remove that burthensome stone *the Bible,* and have found it returning upon them, so as to *grind them,* and their schemes and their confidence *to powder.* The words in my view are these: *(Euseb. Eccles. Hist.* lib. v. cap. 28. *in fin.)* Απλως αρνησαμενοι τον τε νομον και τους προφητας, ανομου και αθεου διδασκαλιας, προφασει χαριτος, εις ισχατον απωλειας ολεθρον καλωλισθησαν. "Some" (who yet, it seems, pretended to be Christians) "absolutely rejecting the law and the prophets by a licentious and atheistical doctrine, which they introduced under a pretence of magnifying the divine goodness, or the gospel," (for χαριτος, *grace,* may signify either) "have plunged themselves into the lowest gulf of perdition."

[k] *He came into his own* [*territories*], *yet his own* [*people*] *did not receive him.*] It is so difficult to express the difference between εις τα ιδια, and οι ιδιοι, that few versions have attempted it; yet, as Grotius hath well observed, the energy of the text cannot be understood without attending to it. That the Jewish nation was, in some peculiar sense, under the care and guardianship of Christ before his incarnation, this passage seems strongly to intimate; and many learned men have shewn it in what appears to me a convincing light.

1 *Who*

SECT. ii.

and the blood of the sacrifices; *nor* could they ascribe it merely to *the will of the flesh*, or to their own superior wisdom and goodness, as if, by the power of corrupted nature alone, they had made themselves to differ; *nor* to *the will of man*, or to the wisest advice and most powerful exhortations which their fellow-creatures might address to them; *but* most humbly acknowledge that they were born *of God*[l], and indebted to the efficacious influences of his regenerating grace for all their privileges and for all their hopes. Compare John iii. 1—8. Tit. iii. 3—7. and Jam. 1. 18.

John I. 13.

14 *And* in order to raise us sinful creatures to such illustrious dignity and happiness, *the* divine and eternal *word*, that glorious person whom we mentioned above, by a most amazing condescension *was made flesh*[m], that is, united himself to our inferior and miserable nature with all its innocent infirmities; *and* he not only made us a transient visit for an hour or a day, but for a considerable time *pitched his tabernacle among us*[n] on earth; *and we* who are now recording these things *contemplated his glory* (compare 1 John i. 1.) with so strict an attention that, from our own personal knowledge, we can bear our testimony to it, that it was in every respect *such a glory as became the Only-begotten of the Father;* for it shone forth, not merely in that radiant appearance which invested him on the mount

14 And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.

[l] *Who were not born of blood, &c. but of God.*] I am sensible this verse is liable to great difficulty and ambiguity. It is an amazing liberty the author of the *New Translation*, published 1727, has taken with it, in explaining it of *a birth which they had not from circumcision, nor from the constitution of the body, nor from the institution of man, but from God.* I readily allow that ἐξ αἱμάτων, *of bloods*, may include circumcision, but cannot confine it to that: patriarchal descent and the blood of sacrifices were so much depended upon by the Jews, that one would suppose them included. Dr. Whitby, with many others, takes *the will of the flesh* to signify carnal descent; and the *will of man* adoption; which I should prefer to the opinion of Mess. L'Enfant and Beausobre, who, without any reason assigned, understand by those *born of the will of man*, proselytes, as opposed to native Jews; a sense in which I never could find the phrase used. The paraphrase I have given, keeps the ideas distinct; answers the frequent signification of *flesh* elsewhere; (compare John iii. 6. Rom. vii. 25. viii. 3, 8, 12. and Gal. v. 17.) and conveys an important and edifying sense, very agreeable to the tenor of scripture. But I submit it to the reader, without pretending that it is the only interpretation the words will bear. I hope he will always carefully distinguish between the text and the paraphrase, and remember how very different a regard is owing to the one and the other.

[m] *Was made flesh.*] *Flesh* often signifies man in this infirm and calamitous state. Compare Gen. vi. 12. Numb. xvi. 22. Deut. v. 26. Psal. cxlv. 21. Isa. xlix. 26. Acts ii. 17. 1 Cor. i. 29. and many other places.

[n] *Pitched his tabernacle among us.*] There is so visible a reference in the word ἐσκήνωσεν, to the dwelling of the *Shechinah* in the *tabernacle of Moses*, that it was very proper to render it by the word I have used.

[o] *Full*

mount of transfiguration, and in the splendor of his continued miracles, but in all his temper, ministration and conduct, through the whole series of his life, in which he appeared *full of grace and truth*[o]; that is, as he was in himself most benevolent and upright, so he made the amplest discoveries of pardon to sinners, which the Mosaic dispensation could not possibly do, and exhibited the most important and substantial blessings[p], whereas that was at best but "a shadow of good things to come." Compare Heb. x. 1.

SECT. ii.

John I. 14.

IMPROVEMENT.

Justly hath our Redeemer said, *Blessed is the man that is not offended in me:* and we may peculiarly apply the words to that great and glorious doctrine of *the deity of Christ*, which is here before us. A thousand high and curious thoughts will naturally arise in our corrupt hearts on this view of it; but may Divine Grace subdue them all to the obedience of an humble faith; so that, with Thomas, we may each of us fall down at his feet, and cry out with sincere and unreserved devotion, *My Lord and my God!* Ver. 1, 2

Let us adore him as the Creator and Preserver of all, the overflowing Fountain of *light and life*. Let us with unutterable pleasure hail this *Sun of Righteousness*, whose rays, *by the tender mercies* of the Father, have *visited* our benighted world to *guide our feet into the way of peace:* and while we lament that *the darkness* hath not *apprehended* and received him, let us earnestly pray that he may ere long penetrate every cloud of ignorance and mist of error, and may diffuse among all the nations knowledge and grace, purity and joy. Let us especially pray that he may penetrate our beclouded souls; and that they may, in holy correspondence to the purposes of his appearing, be *turned as clay to the seal*[q]. Job xxxviii. 14.—*The world knew him not;* but may we know him, and give him that honourable and grateful reception which so great a favour may justly demand!—Yet what returns can be pro- 3, 4 5 10

[o] *Full of grace and truth.*] It is plain that those words, *and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father*, are to be considered as a parenthesis; and these are to be joined with the preceding, thus, *He dwelt among us—full of grace and truth.* But the length of the paraphrase made it inconvenient to transpose them.

[p] The most substantial blessings.] That *truth* is sometimes used, not so much in opposition to falsehood, as to hieroglyphicks, shadows and types, an attentive reader must often have observed. See Heb. viii. 2. ix. 24. and Dan. vii. 16. Compare Col. ii. 17.

[q] *Turned as clay to the seal.*] This beautiful metaphor of the inspired writer seems, by a very expressive contrast, to illustrate the meaning of ου κατελαβεν in the fifth verse. It was for want of this *the darkness did not apprehend* or receive *the light;* did not form itself into a due correspondence to it so as to put on its habit, and clothe itself with the lustre of its reflected beams. How glorious and happy is that soul on which the knowledge of Christ hath that genuine influence!

SECT. ii. proportionable to his condescension *in becoming flesh* for us, and *pitching his tabernacle* among miserable and sinful mortals?—
Ver. Happy apostles that *beheld his glory!* And surely there are in his
11 word such reflections of it as we may also *behold*, and as will oblige us to acknowledge it to be *a glory* that *became the Only-begotten of the Father.*

Let us cordially receive him *as full of grace and truth*, that we
12 also may stand entitled to the privileges of *God's children.* And if we are already of that happy number, let us not arrogate the glory of it to ourselves, or ascribe it entirely to those who have been the instruments of this important change; but remember that *of his*
13 *own will God hath begotten us by the word of his power*, and that *of him we are in Christ Jesus:* to him then let us refer the ultimate praise, if that divine and almighty Saviour be *made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.* 1 Cor. i. 30.

SECT. III.

An angel appears to Zacharias to give him notice of the birth of John the Baptist; and his mother on her conception retires. Luke I. 5—25.

LUKE I. 5.

SECT. iii. *IN the days of Herod* the Great, whom the Romans had made *king of Judea, there was*
Luke I. 5. *a priest named Zacharias, who belonged to* that course of priests in the temple which was called *the course of Abiah:* as Abiah was the head of one of the twenty-four courses into which David distributed the priests (compare 1 Chron. xxiii. 6, and xxiv. 10.) whose memory was still kept up, though none of his line returned from the captivity: *And* his wife (that is, the wife of Zacharias) *was one of the daughters* of the honourable family *of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.*

6 *And they were both* of them persons of a very fair character among men; and not only so, but sincerely and eminently *righteous in the sight of God, walking* before him in the simplicity of their hearts, *in* a faithful observance of *all the* moral *commands*, as well as ceremonial ordinances *and institutions*[a] *of the Lord*, in a very *blameless* and
7 exemplary manner. *And they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren;* and so pious a man as

LUKE I. 5.

THERE was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest, named Zacharias of the course of Abiah: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elizabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that Elizabeth

a Moral *commands*, as well as ceremonial *institutions.*] Some have thought this distinction too nice: but it is certain the word δικαιωματα is sometimes used to signify *ceremonial institutions* (see Heb. ix. 1, 10), though it is often taken in a much more extensive sense. It is, however, evident that all expressed in the *paraphrase* must be intended in the *text*, since under the Jewish dispensation they could not have approved themselves *upright before God* without an obedient regard to the ceremonial law.

b Taking

Elizabeth was barren, and they both were now well striken in years.

as Zacharias was, would not, on any terms, think of taking another wife while she lived[b]; *and* indeed there was no human prospect that their family would ever be built up, because *they were both* very far *advanced in years.* SECT. iii. Luke I. 7.

8 And it came to pass, that, while he executed the priest's office before God, in the order of his course,

And it came to pass, that when he was at Jerusalem, *performing the priest's office before God, in the order of his course,* or of the class to which he belonged, 8

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

According to the custom of assigning the respective offices *of the priesthood* to particular persons then in waiting, which was done by lot, it so happened, that *his lot was* then to perform the most honourable service of daily ministration, that is, *to burn incense* on the golden altar which was before the Lord, contiguous to the holy of holies. (Exod. xxx. 7. xl. 5—26.) This he accordingly did, *when he went into the temple of the Lord,* either at the time of morning or evening sacrifice. 9

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without, at the time of incense.

And the whole multitude of pious Jews assembled for divine worship (according to the usual custom *of the people* at that time), *were praying without* in the courts of the temple *at the time of incense*[c], to declare their concurrence with the priest in that intercession which he was making to God on their account. Compare Rev. viii. 3, 4. 10

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

And, while Zacharias was in the midst of his devotions, on a sudden *there appeared to him* a person, whom, by the form and manner of his appearance, he immediately knew to be *an angel of the Lord;* and he was *standing at the right hand of the altar of incense,* before which he was then ministering. 11

12 And when Zacharias saw *him* he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

And Zacharias, seeing [*him*], though he was a man of such remarkable and experienced piety, *was greatly discomposed, and* an unusual *terror fell upon him.* 12

But

b Taking another wife while she lived.] *Polygamy* as well as *divorce* were, for the hardness of their hearts, tolerated among the Jews; but they seem both to have been, in this age at least, disapproved by persons of the best character. Compare Mal. ii. 14—16. and 1 Tim. iii. 2.

c *Were praying without at the time of incense.*] This was the foundation of that elegant figure by which *prayer* is so often compared to *incense;* (see Psal. cxli. 2. Mal. i. 11. Rev. viii. 3, 4.) and perhaps one reason of ordaining *incense* might be to intimate the acceptableness of those pious *prayers* which were to accompany it. And indeed burning fragrant perfumes was, and in the eastern nations still is, so important a part of the entertainment of illustrious families, that one might well expect it in the house of God. It is so plain that this was only an office of *daily ministration,* and that Zacharias was one of the *ordinary priests,* that one cannot but be surprized that any should ever conclude from this circumstance of the story that Zacharias was sagan, or assistant to the high-priest, and was now performing his grand office on the day of atonement, and so on this foundation should calculate the birth of John the Baptist and of Christ, and all the other feasts which depend upon them: yet this is done in the calendars both of the Roman and Greek church.

SECT. iii.

Luke I. 13.

But the angel immediately scattered his fears, and *said unto him*, with great gentleness of aspect and voice, *Fear not, Zacharias; for* I come unto thee with no message of terror, but, on the contrary, I am sent to assure thee that *thy* frequently repeated *prayer* for the redemption of Israel, as well as that which thou hast formerly offered for a blessing on thine own family, *is* at length *heard*[d]: *and* in proof of it, I add, that *Elizabeth thy wife shall* ere long *bear thee a son* to comfort thee in this thy declining age; *and*, in token of the gracious regard of God to him, *thou shalt call his name John*[e], that is, the grace and favour of God, to intimate that the Divine Grace shall, in a very eminent manner, be upon him. *And* this intimation shall be abundantly answered: for he shall be a person of so distinguished a character, that *thou shalt have joy and transport*[f] in him; *and many* others *shall* also have reason to *rejoice* with thee *on occasion of his birth. For he shall be great*, not in circumstances of outward dignity and splendor, but what is infinitely more important, *in the sight of the Lord*, even Jehovah his God, whose approbation is the highest glory: *and*, in token of his being in a peculiar manner separated to his service, like the ancient Nazarites, Numb. vi. 3.) *he shall drink neither wine nor* any other sort of *intoxicating liquor; and he shall be* so early remarkable for wisdom and piety, that he shall appear to be *filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And*, thus trained up and animated for service, *he shall*, when he appears under a public character, *turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God;* whose ways they have

13. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias; for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14. And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

d *Thy prayer is heard.*] No doubt he had often prayed for children; but, as he seems now to have given up all expectations of that kind, it is reasonable to conclude that these words chiefly relate to his prayers for the deliverance of Israel by the Messiah, whose appearance was then expected by pious persons conversant in the sacred writings (Luke ii. 25, 38. xix. 11. xxiii. 51,) and the more earnestly desired just at this time, as they suffered so many grievous things by the oppression of the Romans and the tyranny of Herod, which toward the close of his reign grew more and more insupportable.

e *Thou shalt call his name John.*] It was the office of the father to name the child. Compare verse 62. It is well known that this name, in Hebrew JOHANAN, (which occurs near thirty times in the Old Testament, though the English reader is not aware that it is the same,) is derived from JEHOVAH and CHEN, and properly signifies *the grace and favour of the Lord.* Elhanan, and many of the other proper names among the Hebrews, had such a kind of signification, and probably were given in token of their good wishes to the infant that received them.

f *Joy and transport.*] Αγαλλιασις properly answers to the word *exultation*, or *leaping for joy*, and is far more expressive than *gladness.* Compare 1 Pet. i. 8. iv. 13. and Mat. v. 12.. in which last places we render it by being *exceeding glad.*

g *To*

have so generally forsaken, even while they are professing themselves to be his peculiar people and boasting in such an extraordinary relation to him. *And*, to prepare them to receive the Lord their God appearing in the person of the Messiah, *he shall go before him*, as an illustrious harbinger, *in the spirit and power of Elijah*; that is, animated by the same sanctity, courage and zeal for reformation, which appeared so remarkable in that celebrated prophet; and, according to that prediction of Malachi, (with which the sacred canon concludes, Mal. iv. 6.) he shall meet with such glorious success in his ministry, as *to convert the hearts of the fathers with* those of *the children* [g]; that is, he shall bring many both of the rising and the declining age, to that real piety towards God, which will be the surest band of their mutual duty towards each other: *and* many of *those who have* hitherto *been disobedient to the wisdom of the just*; that is, insensible of the obligations to real religion, which is the greatest wisdom, *shall he make ready*, as *a people prepared for the Lord*, raising in their minds an expectation of the Messiah, and a disposition to welcome him when he shall appear.

17. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

And Zacharias then *said to the angel, By what* sign *shall I know* that *this* desirable and wonderful event shall be accomplished? *for*, in the course of nature, it seems most improbable; since *I am an old man, and my wife* is also considerably *advanced in years.*

18. And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

And the angel, answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God, and near the throne of his Majesty, as one of the chief officers in his celestial court; of whose appearance to Daniel thou hast so frequently read, (Dan.

19. And the angel, answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

[g] *To convert the hearts of the fathers with those of the children; επιστρεψαι καρδιας πατερων επι τεκνα.*] Here is a plain allusion to Mal. iv. 6. where it is said (as we render it) that *Elijah shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers:* "LEB ABOTH AL BENIM," which the seventy render, *καρδιαν πατερος προς υιον*; in which words it is quoted, Ecclus. xlviii. 10. but St. Luke's version seems as agreeable to the Hebrew. I thought Sir Norton Knatchbull's reason sufficient to justify my rendering it as I have done; which is just as our translators have rendered the like phrase, Judith ix. 10. *δουλον επ' αρχοντι, και αρχοντα επι θεραποντι, the servant with the prince, and the prince with the servant.* But, as Mr. L'Enfant and others, not without some probability render it, *to reconcile fathers and children*, supposing it may relate to domestic dissensions, inseparable from the variety of religious sects then amongst the Jews, I was willing to comprehend that sense in my paraphrase.—Sir Norton Knatchbull's manner of pointing the last clause of the verse appeared to me so elegant, that I could not but follow it. Elsner would render it nearly in the same sense, *By the wisdom of the just, to prepare the disobedient as a people furnished for the Lord*, or formed for him. (Compare Isa. xlii. 7. Septuag.) See *Elsner Observ.* Vol. I. p. 170—173.

[h] From

SECT. iii.

Luke i. 20.

(Dan. viii. 16. ix. 21.) *and* it is by a peculiar favour that *I am* now *sent to speak to thee* in this form of unusual condescension, *and to tell thee these joyful tidings.* My very appearance ought therefore to have been owned, as a sufficient confirmation of the truth of my message; especially by thee, who canst not but know how frequently in Israel the most illustrious persons have been raised up from parents who had long been barren[h]. *And*, since thou dost not acquiesce in this, God will give thee a sign; which, while it confirms thy faith, shall also intimate his displeasure against this sinful mixture of unbelief: for, *behold, thou shalt*, from this moment, *be silent, and unable to speak* any more, *till the day in which these things shall be accomplished*, even till the day in which the child shall be born; *because thou hast not* immediately *believed my words, which* yet, through the divine indulgence and favour to thee, *shall be* assuredly *fulfilled in their season*, that is, as soon as thou canst reasonably expect after thy return home.

20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

And the people, who stood without, *were waiting for Zacharias*, that he might dismiss them with his blessing, (Numb. vi. 23—27. and Lev. ix. 22, 23.) *and* they *wondered that he continued so long in the temple*[i], beyond the usual time: for he stayed a while after the angel disappeared, to present before God such humiliations and thanksgivings as this extraordinary circumstance required. *But when he came out he was not able to speak to them; and*, by the consternation in which he appeared, *they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he himself, by signs, intimated* [*it*] *to them; and* he *continued deaf and dumb*[k] during the remainder of his stay at

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

22 And when he came out he could not speak unto them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

[h] From parents who had long been barren.] Zacharias, being so pious a priest, could not but often have read the account which the scripture gives of the birth of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samson, Samuel, &c. who were all descended from mothers that had been long barren. The resemblance in circumstances might well have produced a peculiar regard to them; and one would have imagined he must immediately have recollected the story of the angel's appearance to Manoah in particular, when the same scene was acted over before his own eyes, and some of the same expressions used by the celestial messenger. Compare Judg. xiii. 2—14.

[i] *So long in the temple.*] All that is here recorded might have passed in a few minutes: it seems probable, therefore, that, since the people took notice of his continuing so much longer than ordinary in the holy place, he spent some time in secret devotion, where, in a mixture of holy affections, rising on so great and extraordinary an occasion, he might easily forget how fast the moments passed away.

[k] *Deaf and dumb.*] As κωφος signifies *deaf*, (Mat. xi. 5. Mark vii. 32, 37. ix. 25. and Luke vii. 22.) as well as *dumb*, (Mat. ix. 33. xii. 22. xv. 31. and Luke xi. 14.) So it is plain, from verse 62, that Zacharias lost his hearing with his speech, during this interval.

[l] *My*

at Jerusalem; a circumstance wisely ordered by Providence to awaken a greater and more general expectation as to the event of so strange an occurrence.

23 And it came to pass that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

23 *And*, after this appearance of the angel to him, *it came to pass that, when the* remaining *days of his ministration were fulfilled, he departed to his own house.*

24 And after these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

24 *And* quickly *after these days* were ended, *Elizabeth his wife conceived*, according to the prediction of the angel; *and*, apprehending her condition, she *concealed herself five months* in an obscure retirement, not only that her conception might more certainly appear, but chiefly that she might enjoy opportunity for those extraordinary devotions which this wonderful favour of Providence demanded: nor could she, under such a circumstance, refrain from *saying*,

25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me, in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

25 The most solemn acknowledgments well become me, because *the Lord* himself *hath thus* miraculously interposed, and *done* this great work *for me*, in his own good time, even *in the days in which he hath* graciously *looked* down *upon me, to take away my reproach* of barrenness *among men*[1]. For barrenness was accounted a peculiar reproach among the Jews, who looked upon it as a singular happiness to be instrumental in multiplying the holy seed, according to the promises which God had made them relating to it.

IMPROVEMENT.

How amiable is the character of this pious pair, who were found *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless!* May our behaviour be thus unblameable, and our obedience thus sincere and universal! And let those, whose office leads them nearer

Ver. 6

1 *My reproach among men.*] That *barrenness* was so amongst the Jews, appears from Gen. xxx. 23. 1 Sam. i. 11. Isa. iv. 1. liv. 1, 4. and many other passages. That a branch of the family of Aaron should fail, would also be looked upon as a particular calamity, and might, by ignorant and uncharitable people, be interpreted as a judgment: and so much the rather, considering the many promises God had made to increase the families of his obedient people, Exod. xxxii. 13. Lev. xxvi. 9. Deut. vii. 13. and Psal. cxxvii. 3, 4, 5.—I will here digress so far as to observe, that, considering how the whole *Jewish policy* was interwoven with those *acts of religion* which were to be performed by the priests *alone*, it might seem wonderful that no provision at all should be made for *entailing the priesthood* on any other family, if that of Aaron should happen to be *extinct*. Leaving this contingency unprovided for, was in effect putting the whole credit of the Jewish religion upon the perpetual continuance of the male branches of that family: an issue on which no man of Moses' prudence, nor indeed of common sense, would have rested his legislation, if he had not been truly conscious of its divine original; especially after two of Aaron's four sons had been cut off in one day for a rash act in the execution of their office, as soon as they were initiated into it, and died *without any children*. Numb. iii. 4.

a *Nazareth.*]

SECT. iii. nearer to God than others, remember their peculiar obligation to imitate such an example.

Ver. 13 Let us observe, with pleasure, that the *prayers* which such worshippers offer *come up with acceptance* before God; to whom no costly perfume is so sweet as the fragrancy of a character like this. —*An answer of peace* was here returned when the case seemed to be most helpless. Let us learn to *wait patiently for the Lord*, and leave it to his own infinite wisdom to chuse the time and manner in which he shall appear for us.

12 *Zacharias*, accustomed as he was to converse with the God of heaven, was nevertheless, as we see, thrown into great consternation at the *appearance* of his angelic messenger. And may we not regard it, therefore, as an instance of the goodness as well as wisdom of God, that he determines that the services which these 13, 19 heavenly spirits render us should be generally invisible?—It is delightful to observe that amiable condescension with which *Gabriel*, the courtier of heaven, behaved on this occasion. Let it teach us with pleasure to pursue the humblest offices of duty and love which God may assign us towards any of our fellow-servants, even in the lowest stations.

17 Happy was the holy *Baptist* in being employed in this blessed work of preparing men's hearts to receive a Saviour, and reducing *the disobedient to the wisdom of the just*. May we be inspired with some degree of zeal like his, in our proper sphere, to pursue so noble a design!

18, 20 We see, in the instance of *Zacharias*, that some remainders of *unbelief* may be found even in a faithful heart: let us guard against them, as remembering they will be displeasing to God, and hurtful to ourselves.—And, to conclude, when Providence 24 favours us with any peculiarly gracious interpositions, let us attentively remark the hand of God in them; and let religious *retirement* leave room for serious recollection and devout acknowledgments.

SECT. IV.

The angel Gabriel is sent to the virgin Mary, to inform her of the conception of Christ by her, in which she humbly acquiesces. Luke I. 26—38.

LUKE I. 26.

SECT. iv. *IN the sixth month* after Elizabeth had conceived, *the* same *angel Gabriel*, who had been Luke I. 26 the messenger of such good news to Zacharias, *was sent from God to a* small and inconsiderable *city of Galilee*, which was *called Nazareth*[a]; be- 27 ing charged with an important commission *to a virgin*,

LUKE I. 26.

AND in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth.

[a] *Nazareth.*] A city in the tribe of *Zebulun*, which was reduced to so low and contemptible a condition, that no good thing was expected from thence. John i. 46.

[b] *She*

SECT. iv.

Luke I. 28.

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured; the Lord, *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

29 And when she saw *him* she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

virgin, who was *contracted*, according to the Jewish method of espousals, *to a man whose name was Joseph:* a descendant *of the* royal *house of David;* which illustrious family was now reduced to so low a condition, that Joseph followed the employment of a carpenter: *and the virgin's name was Mary*, of the same lineage. *And the angel entered in* to the room, in which she was alone; and, standing before her, surrounded her with an extraordinary lustre, he addressed himself *unto her, and said, Hail, O thou* distinguished *favourite* of heaven! I congratulate thy happiness; for *the Lord is with thee*, and is about to manifest his condescending regard in a manner which shall oblige all around thee to acknowledge that *thou art blessed among women*, the greatest and happiest of thy sex.

Now the pious and modest virgin, *when she* 29
saw this appearance of [*the angel,*] and heard his message, as *she* plainly perceived it to be something of a very extraordinary nature, *was* much *disturbed at his discourse*[b]; *and*, not imagining herself at all worthy of such applause and congratulation, she *reasoned with herself*, for a while, *what kind of salutation this could be*[c], and from what original it could proceed.

And the angel, immediately perceiving it, to 30
disperse the doubt she was in, *said unto her* again, *Fear not, Mary; for* I am a messenger sent from heaven to tell thee that *thou hast found* signal *favour with God. And behold* and observe 31
it with due regard, for I assure thee, in his name, that from this very time *thou shalt be with child, and* at the proper season shalt *be delivered of a son, and shalt call his name Jesus*, the divine Saviour; for he shall come on that important errand, to save men from the tyranny of sin and the displeasure of God. *He shall be* incompa- 32
rably *great and* glorious, insomuch that he *shall* justly *be called the Son of the Most High* God; *and the Lord God shall give him the throne of David his father*, from whom thou art descended; so that, like David, he shall be the Sovereign of God's chosen people, and possess that extensive empire

[b] *She was disturbed at his discourse.*] Some would render ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ αὐτῦ, *on account of him*; and Heinsius hath abundantly shewn how common this manner of speaking is in the sacred writings.

[c] *What kind of salutation.*] She seems to have suspected it might possibly proceed from the artifice of some evil spirit, to inspire her with sentiments of vanity and pride.

SECT. iv.

empire which was promised to the seed of that holy patriarch: (2 Sam. vii. 12, 13. Psal. ii. 7, 8. and Psal. cxxxii. 11, 12.) *And he* shall inherit
Luke i. 33. the kingdom, with this circumstance of superior glory, that, whereas David is now sleeping with his fathers, this exalted Prince *shall rule over the house of Jacob*, even all the true Israel of God, *for ever;* and, though the most potent monarchies of the earth will be successively dissolved, yet *of his kingdom there shall be no end*, even as long as the sun and moon endure. See Psal. lxvii. 5, 17. Isa. ix. 7. Dan. vii. 14.

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34 *And Mary replied to the angel*, O thou heavenly messenger, permit me to ask, *How can this* possibly *be* from this time, as thou hast intimated to me, *since I am as yet a virgin*[d]?

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35 *And the angel, answering, said unto her*, There is nothing in that objection, great as it may seem, for this whole affair is to be a scene of miracle: *the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High* God *shall* thus *overshadow thee* by an amazing energy, to produce an effect hitherto, from the foundation of the earth, unknown: *and therefore that holy Offspring of thine shall*, with regard to this miraculous conception, as well as another and yet greater consideration,

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

36 *be called the Son of God. And behold*, to confirm thy faith in a declaration which might seem so incredible, I farther assure thee that *thy cousin Elizabeth also hath*, by the miraculous power of God, *conceived a son*, though she be now *in her old age; and this is the sixth month* of pregnancy *with her who hath long been called barren*[e], and spoken of as one who could have no hope of being a mother. And scruple not to believe what I have told thee with regard to thyself as

36 And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

[d] *How can this be,—since I am as yet a virgin?*] Some would render this, *What! shall this be if I have no intercourse with a man?* as if she would be resolved whether this birth were to be produced in a common or a miraculous manner. But I think it is more natural to suppose that she understood the former words as an intimation that the effect was immediately to take place, to which her present circumstance seemed, humanly speaking, an invincible objection. Our English version, *I know not a man*, is more literal than what is here given; but I do not apprehend that the strictest fidelity requires to render the Hebraism so exactly; the sense is evidently the same.

[e] *Who hath been called barren.*] I cannot think (with some learned and judicious persons) that *to be called* and *to be*, signify entirely the same thing, so as that the former should be thought a mere pleonasm, and rendered just as the latter. The phrase seems to signify, in the language of scripture, not only that the thing shall really *be* what it is *called*, but also that it shall be *taken notice of* in that view: which I think will appear from an attentive consideration of the chief *texts* which have been produced to establish the opposite opinion. Compare Isa. i. 26. ix. 6. xxxv. 8. xlvii. 1, 5. lvi. 7. lxi. 3, 6. Mat. v. 9, 19. xxi. 13. Mark xi. 17. 1 John iii. 1.

[f] *Mary*

37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

as well as her; *for* thou well knowest that *nothing* is, or ever *will be*, *impossible to God*, whose almighty power operates with equal ease in the most miraculous as in the most common productions. SECT. iv. Luke I. 37.

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

And, strange as the message was, *Mary* firmly believed it[f], and *said*, with the most amiable humility and piety, *Behold*, I am *the handmaid of the Lord*, and would approve myself faithful and obedient; *may it be unto me according to thy word!* I thankfully accept the honour, of which I confess I am unworthy; and humbly resign my reputation, and even my life[g], to the divine care and providence, while I wait the accomplishment of thy prediction. 38

Then the angel, having executed his commission, *departed from her*, and returned to his abode in the heavenly regions.

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH what holy wonder and pleasure should we trace this notice of an *incarnate Redeemer?* and how thankfully should we adore his condescending goodness, that for us men, and for our salvation, he did not despise the womb of so obscure a *virgin?* Ver. 26, 27

We too are ready in our thoughts, with *Gabriel*, to congratulate her on so distinguished an honour, and to say, as one did to *Christ*, in the days of his flesh, *Blessed is the womb that bare thee*, O Lord, *and the breasts which thou hast sucked!* (Luke xi. 27.) But let us remember there is yet a nobler *blessedness* than this attending those, in whose hearts he is so formed by divine grace, that they *hear his word and do it.* 28

Let us hear it, with joy, that he is *Jesus* the Saviour; but let us also consider that he is Christ the anointed Sovereign, who is to rule over God's people for ever. Remember, O my soul, that *of his kingdom there shall be no end;* and esteem it thine unspeakable honour and happiness to be enrolled amongst his faithful subjects. 31, 32

The

[f] *Mary* firmly believed it.] It is worthy of our remark, that Mary, though a young virgin, should so readily believe an event, in itself so much more wonderful than that which Zacharias, though an aged priest, had found it so difficult to credit. And it may be observed, that the sacred writers are particularly careful to record instances of this kind in which God doth, as it were, *out of the mouths of babes and sucklings perfect his praise.*

[g] Resign my reputation, and even my life.] For both these, humanly speaking, might have been in danger, considering the severity of the Mosaic law against those who had violated the faith of their espousals. (Compare Deut. xxii. 23, 24.) And though so impious a prince as Herod, who was then on the Jewish throne, undoubtedly controlled many of the laws of God, yet the natural severity and extravagant jealousy of his temper, would probably engage him to execute this in its full terror.

SECT. IV. The glories promised to such in the future state are so far beyond experience, or even imagination, that they might, to sense, appear
Ver. as incredible as the message which Mary received: but let us re-
33 member the eternal truth of what Gabriel suggested to her, that
37 *nothing is impossible to God.* He can therefore ripen our imperfect souls to all the improvement and pleasures of the heavenly state, as easily as he produces the meanest vegetable on the earth.

Let the temper of the blessed *virgin*, on this great occasion, be therefore the beautiful model of ours: so, when the purposes of the Divine Love are declared to us, may we resign ourselves unto the Lord; and with such calm tranquillity, firm faith and joyful acquiescence, may we wait the accomplishment of his gracious promise, and say, *Behold the servants of the Lord! be it unto us*
38 *according to his word!* So do thou, O Lord, animate and support us! and the weakest of thy children shall not stumble at the greatest of thy promises *through unbelief*; but, *being strong in faith*, shall *give glory to God.*

SECT. V.

Mary visits Elizabeth; her faith is confirmed by it, and she breaks out into a song of praise. Luke I. 39—56.

LUKE I. 39.

SECT. V. *IN those days*, or soon after the time that she received the extraordinary message mentioned above, *Mary arose* from Nazareth, where she
Luke I. 39. then was, *and went*[a], *with* all the *expedition* she conveniently could, *to* what was called *the hill-country*, which lay towards the south of Canaan; and came *into a city of Judah*, where Zacharias dwelt, with a comfortable expectation that this visit might tend both to confirm her faith and
40 vindicate her character. *And* accordingly she *entered into the house of* her kinsman *Zacharias*, *and*, to the pleasing surprise of her friend, *saluted Elizabeth.*

41 *And it came to pass that, as soon as Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant in her womb did*, with a most unusual emotion, *leap* for joy, as sensible of the approach of Him whose fore-

LUKE I. 39.

AND Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill-country with haste into a city of Judah,

40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth.

41 And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb: and

[a] *Mary arose and went*, &c.] This was a very wise determination; as it was very probable that, by communicating the vision she had seen, and perhaps also describing the form in which the angel appeared, she might convince Zacharias and Elizabeth that there was something singular in her case, and so might bring in the reputation of such worthy and eminent persons to establish her own, in a circumstance which might otherwise expose her to great suspicion and censure. I shall only add, that it is not improbable the city here spoken of might be Hebron; a city belonging to the priests in the tribe of Judah and the hill-country. Josh. xxi. 11.

[b] *Happy*

and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.

forerunner he was appointed to be. *And Elizabeth was* directed to consider it in this view; for she was immediately *filled with* an extraordinary degree of divine inspiration, by the influences of *the Holy Spirit.* And, far from envying the superior honour of her young cousin, she, in very exalted language, congratulated her on the occasion; *and, crying out with a loud voice,* as in a sacred kind of transport, *she said,* in the very words which Gabriel had before used to the virgin:

SECT. V.

Luke 1.41.

42. And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed *art* thou among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of thy womb.

42

Most *blessed art thou,* O Mary, *among all the women* in the whole world; *and* most *blessed is the* sacred and miraculous *fruit of thy womb.*

43. And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

And indeed, when I consider the matter attentively, I cannot but cry out, in amazement, *Whence is this* honour done *to me, that* she, who is so highly honoured as to be *the mother of* that wonderful and divine child, whom I would with all humility own as *my Lord, should come unto me* as a guest under my roof; to whom I should rather have hastened to pay my homage? And that he, of whom thou art now pregnant, is indeed my Lord the Messiah, I certainly know by

43

44. For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

what I have now felt; *for, behold, as soon as the* first *voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears,* as thou wast entering into the house, *the* very *infant* within me *leaped in my womb for joy,* with a vigour and sprightliness unknown before; which I am taught to interpret as a homage done to Him before whose face he is to go to prepare his way. *And,* when I consider the whole affair in all its variety of circumstances, I have reason to say, *Happy is she that* so readily *believed* [b] what to sense appeared so utterly incredible, without so much as requiring any miraculous sign of it; *for* surely *there shall be* a very faithful and *an* exact *accomplishment of* all *those things which have been spoken to her from the Lord.*

44

45. And blessed *is* she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things, which were told her from the Lord.

45

46. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

Then *Mary also* was filled with a transport of holy joy; and, under the direction of the same Spirit, as well as in many of those words which she

46

[b] *Happy is she that believeth,* &c.] I doubt not but here is an oblique reference to the unhappiness of Zacharias, who had not immediately believed the promise of God to him, and thereby had incurred so sensible a mark of the divine displeasure. I have gently touched upon it in the paraphrase; but I was cautious of being too express, lest I should violate that great decorum, which the Spirit of God, as well as the rules of modesty and piety, taught her to observe, when the faults of a husband were in question. It may be added, that these words shewed her knowledge of Mary's immediate belief of the promise made to her: a knowledge which she could only gain by divine revelation, and which, therefore, would be a mutual confirmation of the faith of both.

SECT. V.

she had learnt from the sacred oracles, she, in the warmth of her devotion, *said*, [c] ‘ *My* very *soul doth* most affectionately *magnify* and extol *the Lord*. *And my spirit*, with all its most exalted powers, *rejoiceth in God* as *my Saviour*; who, I trust, is granting me my own share in that gospel which, by the appearance of this his dear Son, he is sending to so many others:

Luke i. 47. 47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48 *For*, notwithstanding all the meanness of my circumstances, and the obscure condition in which I live, yet *he hath looked* with a distinguishing regard and most surprising condescension, *upon the low estate of his handmaid; for, behold*, he hath conferred such an honour upon me, that I am fully persuaded, according to his word by the angel, that not only the present age, but *all future generations shall call me happy*, [d] and shall admire the peculiar grace and favour that the Lord

48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

49 hath shewn me. *For he who is powerful* beyond all our conceptions, even the Almighty God, to whom this strange event is not only possible, but easy, *hath done* these *great* and unheard of *things for me; and his name* and nature [*is*] so *holy*, that I cannot suspect the accomplishment of any thing that he hath

49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy *is* his name:

50 promised. *His mercy also* hath in every age been the hope and confidence of his people; and I well know that it [*is*] *from generation*

50 And his mercy *is* on them that fear him, from generation to generation.

51 *to generation on them that fear him. He hath* often *wrought* the most glorious displays of *strength by his* irresistible *arm: he hath* often *dispersed the haughty* sinners that exalt themselves against him, and confounded them *in* those schemes which were *the* most laboured

51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 *imagination of their* own *hearts*. [e] *He hath* often

52 He hath put down the

[c] *Mary also said.*] It is observable that most of these phrases are borrowed from the Old Testament, with which the pious virgin seems to have been very conversant; especially from the Song of Hannah; in which there were so many passages remarkably suitable to her own case. Compare 1 Sam. ii. 1—10. Gen. xxx. 13. Psalm ciii. 17. xcviii. 1. lxxxix. 10. cvii. 9. and Mic. vii. 20.

[d] *Shall call me happy*, μακαριουσι.] I think there are several other texts where μακαριος should rather be rendered *happy* than *blessed*, which is the proper signification of ευλογητος; (see 1 Tim. i. 11. vi. 15. and Rev. xx. 6.) yet I cannot say that the distinction is always material, nor do I always observe it in the following version.

[e] *He hath dispersed the haughty*, &c. διεσκορπισεν υπερηφανους διανοια καρδιας αυτων.] I know this may be rendered, *He hath scattered those that prided themselves in the imagination*, or thought, *of their hearts*: but I apprehend the words would well bear the yet more emphatical sense I have here given them. And thus they are peculiarly applicable to the gospel; in which God doth not only *cast down imaginations and every high thing*, &c. (2 Cor. x. 5.) by the humbling scheme of his recovering grace, but hath remarkably confounded his most insolent enemies in their own most elaborate projects, and

the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree:

53 He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.

54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy,

55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

often *brought down mighty potentates from their thrones* of dignity and power, *and*, by some singular interposition of his providence, *hath exalted the lowly* from their obscurest state, as he is now doing with respect to me. *He hath* often *filled the hungry with* a variety of *good things, and hath sent away the rich* and luxurious sinner *empty*[f]; having stripped him of all his plenty, and turned him out of all those possessions in which he was once so confident. And, as a glorious instance of his condescension and his power, though our condition be so low in comparison of what it once was, *he hath* now *succourcd Israel*[g], and taken him as *his child* into paternal protection: and all this he hath graciously done *in remembrance of his everlasting mercy*[h], *Even as he* long ago *spoke to our fathers*, and promised it *to Abraham and to his seed*, throughout all generations: and we, the heirs of those promises, shall now behold them happily fulfilled in all the fulness of their extent and glory."

SECT. V.

Luke I. 52.

53 54 55

Then Mary abode with her cousin Elizabeth *about three months*, till very near the time of her delivery; *and* then *returned to her own house* and lived privately there; concealing, but not forgetting these extraordinary things, which had so powerful a tendency to establish and animate her mind[i].

56

IMPROVE-

established his sacred cause by the violent attempts they have made to suppress it. (Compare Psal. ii. 1—3.) A triumph of divine wisdom, of which succeeding ages furnish out memorable and frequent instances at home and abroad.

[f] *Sent away the rich empty.*] Εξαπεστειλε strictly signifies, *hath sent*, or *turned them out of doors*; and very beautifully represents God as the great proprietor of all, and the greatest of men as his tenants at will, whom he can strip and turn out, whenever he pleases.

[g] *He hath succoured Israel.*] That the word αντιλαβετο properly signifies to interpose in favour of a person in great necessity, or extreme danger, Elsner hath abundantly proved, *Observ.* Vol. I. page 175.

[h] *In remembrance of his everlasting mercy.*] The beginning of the 55th verse should, I think, be included in a parenthesis. It makes an easier and stronger sense to suppose that this *remembrance of his mercy for ever* refers to his everlasting mercies promised to the patriarchs. Compare Gen. xvii. 19. Isa. lv. 3. Rom. xi. 29. Yet I acknowledge those blessings might be said to be promised *to them, and their seed for ever*, which were entailed on their remotest generations. (Compare Gen. xii. 15. xviii. 8. &c.) Care is therefore taken to express both in the paraphrase.

[i] Animate her mind.] Many of the things which had passed in this journey, and especially that rapturous inspiration which she had herself experienced, and which till now was probably unknown to her, must elevate her thoughts to a very sublime pitch, and enkindle in her attentive reflecting mind high expectations and glorious hopes. See Luke ii. 19, 51.

SECT. V.

IMPROVEMENT.

How natural is it for those, who have themselves received
Ver. 40 mercy of the Lord, to communicate their joy to others, and to seek the society of their *fellow saints*, whom he hath honoured with the signal manifestations of his favour?—Happy are they, whose friendship is confirmed and heightened by such endearing
41, 42 ties! And thrice happy the humble and generous souls who can thus, like *Elizabeth*, lose the thoughts of private honour and interest in a cordial concern for the glory of God and the good of men; *rejoicing* to see others, perhaps in some respects their *inferiors*, raised to stations of service more distinguished than their own!

43 If this pious matron thought herself so highly honoured in receiving *a visit* from *the mother* of our *infant Saviour*, how much more doth it become us to admire the condescension of our glorious *Lord*, that he will represent himself as graciously *knocking at the door* of our hearts, and ready not only to make us a transient *visit*, but to take up his stated abode with us?

May our faith, like that of the *blessed virgin*, delightfully rest on all the promises he makes, as firmly believing that *there shall be*
45 *an accomplishment of these things which are spoken!* And, while that accomplishment is delayed, may the pleasing expectation of
46 it tune our voice to a *song of praise* like hers!—Let *our souls* also
47 *magnify the Lord*, and *our spirits rejoice* in that *God* whom we hope, through grace, to be *our Saviour*; whose condescension hath
38 *regarded* us in such low circumstances; and whose almighty power
49 and everlasting love *have done* such *great things* for us.—He
53, 55 hath provided heavenly food, to satisfy our *hungry souls*; and hath
54 raised us to *enjoy the mercies* which, in more obscure intimations only, he *promised to the* pious *patriarchs*.—*His mercy* is on all
50 that *fear him*, through succeeding generations.—May such distinguished favours animate our hearts with those sentiments of devotion and zeal which they are so well qualified to excite! Otherwise the joy of the *Old Testament saints*, in the distant and imperfect prospect of these blessings, will testify against our insensibility in the superior advantages with which we are favoured.

SECT. VI.

The birth and circumcision of John the Baptist. Luke I. 57—66.

LUKE I. 57.

SECT. VI. *AND, when the full time for Elizabeth's delivery was come, she brought forth a son,* ex-
Luke I. 57. actly according to the prediction of the angel to Zacharias. *And her neighbours, and her relations,*

LUKE I. 57.

NOW Elizabeth's full time came, that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called;

63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed: and he spake, and praised God.

tions, were acquainted with it; and, having *heard* SECT. vi.
that the Lord, in so illustrious and remarkable a
manner, *had magnified* and displayed *his mercy* Luke I. 58.
to her, they ran to testify their joy, *and* sincerely
congratulated her on the happy occasion.

And, in particular, *it came to pass, that on the* 59
eighth day they came together in some considerable numbers, *to circumcise the child* according to the law (Gen. xvii. 12. Lev. xii. 3.) *and*, as it was then customary to give it a name[a], *they* that were present would have *called him Zacharias, after the name of his father: But his mother*, 60 who had been more particularly informed by her husband of what had passed between him and the angel in the temple, *answered and said*, *Nay*, my friends, it must not be so; *but he shall be called John. And* when *they* objected to this, and *said* 61 *unto her, None of thy kindred*, either by birth or marriage, *is called by this name:* In order to 62 determine the question, *and* to be fully satisfied, *they made signs to his father*, to know *what he would have him called. And he*, by signs, *asked* 63 *for a writing tablet*[b]; *and*, when he had received it, he *wrote, saying, His name is John;* thereby declaring it a settled point, that would admit of no farther debate. *And they were all amazed* at the determination. But greater still was their astonishment, to find his tongue at liberty *and* 64 his speech restored; for *his mouth was immediately opened, and his tongue* [*loosed*]; *and he spake* audibly and distinctly; beginning, as it was most reasonable, with *praising God*[c] in that sublime hymn which we shall presently record.

And

[a] As it was then customary to give it a name.] The giving the child its *name* was no more a part of the original intent of *circumcision* than of *baptism*; it was an incidental circumstance which custom had added. And I cannot forbear saying that, in administering the Christian ordinance, I think care should be taken to order the voice so that it may plainly appear we only then speak to the child by the *name* which hath been already given it.—That the *father* among the ancients used to name the children, and that it was customary often to give them the *name* of their immediate ancestors, Elsner has shewn on this text.

[b] *A writing tablet*, πινακιδιον.] We have so few diminutives in our language, that I was not willing to lose this, which much more exactly answers the original than *table*.

[c] *And his tongue* [*loosed*]; *and he spake, praising God.*] I entirely agree with the learned Raphelius, (*Annot. ex Herod.* pages 219, 220.) that Elsner's criticism (*Observ.* Vol. I. page 178, 179.) is not to be admitted, which would render it, *And his tongue also spake, praising God.* It would then have been ευλογουσα, instead of ευλογων; and Raphelius has given unanswerable instances, in the most approved writers, of a *verb* joined with *two nouns*, when in strict propriety it can only belong to one of them. Compare 1 Cor. iii. 2. where the original is, Γαλα υμας εποτισα, και ου βρωμα· *I have given you milk to drink, and not meat.*

SECT. VI.

Luke I. 65.

And a religious awful kind of *dread fell*, not only on those that were present, but *on all that dwelt near them: and all these things*, in a very particular detail of circumstances, *were published*, and became the great topic of conversation
66 *over the whole hill-country of Judea. And all* wise and pious persons *that heard* [*them*] *laid them up* carefully *in their hearts*, as matters highly worthy their future consideration, *saying*, *What kind of a child will this be*, who is ushered into the world in so extraordinary a way? *And* their expectations were farther raised by observing that, as he grew up, *the hand of the Lord was* signally *with him*; and, through the divine blessing, he appeared not only a healthful and thriving, but likewise, on other and higher accounts, a very hopeful child.

65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill-country of Judea.

66 And all they that had heard *them*, laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be? And the hand of the Lord was with him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 57 So sure are the promises of God, and so certainly will the *full accomplishment* of them another day shame our suspicious unbelieving hearts, and awaken the tongues of his servants to *songs of*
58 *praise!* Happy the souls who, by a lively faith in them, are anticipating that blessed day, and whose minds, kept in tune by these pleasing views, are opening themselves to the most tender sympathy with others, and, like the *kindred* of this pious pair, are making the religious joys of others their own; so sharing, rather than envying the superior favours bestowed upon them!

65, 66 Let us learn, with them, wisely *to observe* what God is doing around us and *to lay up* remarkable occurrences *in our hearts:* that, by comparing one step of divine conduct with another, we may the better *understand the loving kindness of the Lord*, and be engaged to act with more regular obedience in a holy subserviency to his gracious purposes.

66 When, like good *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth*, we have the pleasure to see our infant offspring growing up in safety and chearfulness, with healthy constitutions of body and towardly dispositions of mind too, let us ascribe it to *the hand of the Lord*, which is *upon them for good.* Let us remember that we are at best but the instruments of the divine care and favour to them; and that our families would soon become scenes of desolation, did not God watch over them in a thousand circumstances of danger and distress, which no prudence of ours could have foreseen, and which no care of ours could have been able to provide against.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

Zacharias, on the birth of his son, breaks out into a sublime anthem of praise. Luke I. 67, *to the end.*

Luke I. 67.

AND his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

Luke I. 67.

NOW John being born, as we have before described it, *Zacharias his father*, when he first spake after the birth of this extraordinary child, *was filled with* the influences of *the Holy Spirit; and*, in an exalted strain of sacred rapture, he *prophesied, saying*,

SECT. VII.

Luke i. 67.

68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people.

"*Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel, be-* 68
cause he hath now owned the relation in so signal a manner; for *he hath graciously looked* down *upon his people* in their distress, *and wrought out* an illustrious and complete *redemption* for them:

69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

And he *hath raised up for* 69
us a horn of salvation,[a] even an honourable and powerful Saviour, who is already conceived, and will quickly be born, according to our long expectation, *in the family of his servant David:*

70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began;

As he hath spoken by the 70
inspiration of his Spirit, and given frequent intimations to us *by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been from the beginning of time.*[b]. It now appears that none of those 71
predictions are forgotten by him, since he is

71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us:

preparing for us such a glorious deliverance *that we may* thus *obtain salvation from* the power of the most formidable of *our enemies, and* may at length be rescued, by his redeeming grace, *from the hand of all that hate us*:[c]

72 To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers

And this gracious messenger, hath God now sent, *that he may* faithfully *perform the mercy* 72
which

[a] *A horn of salvation.*] As *a horn* is often used, for the most obvious reasons, to express *strength* and *dignity*, it being the ornament and defence of the creature that wears it; so it is sometimes used in the Old Testament with a peculiar reference to the Messiah. Compare Psalm cxxxii. 17. lxxxix. 24. 1 Sam. ii. 10. and 2 Sam. xxii. 3.

[b] *From the beginning of time.*] It cannot certainly be inferred from hence, as some have argued, that there was *from the beginning of the world* a series of prophets, or that every individual prophet spoke of the Messiah; which can never be proved without doing great violence to the remaining writings of some amongst them. The words of Zacharias only amount to this, that the generality of prophecies, in all ages, refer to this great event. Compare Acts x. 43.

[c] Be rescued by his redeeming grace *from the hand of all that hate us.*] This seems to have been the mind of the Spirit, as appears by the whole tenor of scripture; but it is impossible to say whether Zacharias fully understood his own words, which, it is certain, the older prophets, in some cases, did not. See 1 Pet. i. 10, 11.

SECT. vii.

which he [*promised*] *to our fathers*,[d] the blessed effects of which extend also to them; *and*
Luke 1. 72. by him shall God appear to *be mindful of his holy covenant*, which hath passed through so many various dispensations, yet still in the main
73 continues the same: It being indeed no other than *the oath which he* so solemnly *sware unto Abraham*[e] *our father*, [Gen. xxii. 16,
74 17.] According *to* the tenor of which he will now *grant us* the favour of an opportunity and a heart *to serve him without fear, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies,*
75 [*And to walk*] *before him*, under a religious sense of his presence, *all the days of our life, in* the paths of the strictest *holiness and righteousness.*[f]

Then, turning to his new-born son, he added,
76 *And thou*, my dear *child, shalt* have the honour to *be* justly *called The prophet of the Most High* God: an illustrious Prophet indeed! *for thou* art he, who, according to the prediction of Isaiah, (Isa. xl. 3.) *shalt go before the face of the Lord*, even of our Divine Messiah, to give notice of his approach, and *to prepare his ways.*
77 It shall be thine honourable and delightful office, not merely to bring the tidings of some temporal deliverance, but *to give the knowledge of* eternal *salvation to his people in* directing them how they are to obtain *the for-*
78 *giveness of their sins;* Which, how great soever they have been, may now be obtained *through the tender compassions of our God*[g], whose bowels of mercy have yearned over his backsliding children; *by* virtue of *which* com-
79 passions *the dawning of the* celestial *day*[h] *hath visited*

fathers, and to remember his holy covenant:

73 The oath which he swore to our father Abraham;

74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear,

75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

76 And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways;

77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins,

78 Through the tender mercies of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us,

79 To give light to them

d *Perform the mercy* promised *towards our fathers.*] Ποιησαι ελεος μετα των πατερων ημων most literally signifies *to exercise mercy towards our fathers*; and might perhaps intimate that the mercy extended to the pious patriarchs was owing to Christ, who was afterwards to appear. Compare Rom. iii. 25. I cannot recollect any other place where ποιησαι ελεος is *to perform a promise.*

e *The oath which he sware unto Abraham.*] In vindication of our *version* from any objection which might arise to a learned reader from the construction of that *original* μνησθηναι διαθηκης;—ορκον ον ωμοσε κ. τ. λ. see *Bos, exercit.* p. 35. and *Elsner in loc.*

f And to walk *in holiness and righteousness.*] This, as well as deliverance from enemies, being spoken of as the merciful grant of God, I cannot but conclude it refers to those passages in which God promised to pour out extraordinary degrees of a pious spirit on his people under the reign of the Messiah. Compare Is. xliv. 1—5. Jer. xxxi. 31—34. and Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.

g *Tender compassions of our God.*] Σπλαγχνα ελεους, his *bowels of mercy*: A strong *Hebraism*; which, though I have not literally retained it in my *version*, I have expressed in the *paraphrase*; and it is a method I shall often take in like cases. Compare Jer. xxxi. 18—20.

h *The dawning of the day.*] It is true that ανατολη may signify, as some here render it, *the rising sun*: and I doubt not but here is a reference to such texts as Mal. iv. 2. and Is. lx. 1—3. and, possibly, considering

them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

visited us from on high: And the Sun of Righteousness is shortly arising, to spread sacred knowledge and joy over the regions of ignorance and misery, *to enlighten those that sit in darkness, and,* as it were, *in the* very *shadow of death*[i] itself, or in the most gloomy and dangerous condition, and *to direct our* wandering *feet into the way of peace* and felicity." SECT. vii. Luke I. 79.

80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

Thus was John the Baptist ushered into the world, and thus were his infant days graced with wonders. *And the child grew up and became strong in spirit,* giving early tokens both of an heroic genius and a pious disposition, through the work of God's Spirit upon him. Compare Judg. xiii. 24, 25. *And,* his pious parents dying while he *was* young, or being peculiarly directed by a divine revelation in this affair, he did not appear in the service of the temple, even when he came to the age *in* which the priests began their ministrations; but, by divine dispensation and direction, was led to retire into *desert places,* and to continue there *till the day of his being* publicly *manifested to Israel,* and, as it were, inaugurated among them under his prophetic character; for which the austerity and devotion of this solitude was a happy preparation[k]. 80

IMPROVE-

ing the known ambiguity of the *Hebrew* word ZEMACH, which also signifies *a branch,* there may be some allusion to Jer. xxiii. 5. and Zech. iii. 8. But it is strange that any should have thought Zacharias, a *Jewish* priest, hath here referred to the *Greek version* of those texts. It is well known the word properly signifies that part of the heavens where the light begins to arise and the first shining of that light. Compare Rev. vii. 2. *The dawning of the day* seemed therefore a very literal version; and, I apprehend, it more beautifully describes the state of things just at this interval than if the sun had been represented as actually risen.

[i] *The shadow of death.*] Such phrases as these, do, with peculiar propriety, describe the ignorant and miserable state of the *Gentile* world, and perhaps this former part of the *verse* may refer to them; but, as Christ's preaching to the *Jews* in *Galilee* (for it was only to *Jews* he applied, Mat. xv. 24 x. 5, 6. and Rom. xv. 8.) is said, Mat. iv. 14—16. to be an accomplishment of Isa. ix. 1, 2. to which Zacharias here probably refers, I was not willing in the *paraphrase* to fix it to the *Gentiles.* The sad character and circumstances of the *Jews* at this time, as described by Josephus, too well suit the representation here made.

[k] This solitude was a happy preparation.] It may further be observed that such a *retirement* also contributed to his acceptance, by raising a character for eminent mortification and sanctity; inured him to the oppositions he was to expect in his work; and naturally prevented any such intimacy with Christ, in their childhood and youth, as might possibly have occasioned some suspicion as to the impartiality of the testimony which John afterwards bore to him. Compare John i. 31.—Elsner hath shewn, as Schmidius had before observed, that the word ανασειξις often signifies the *inauguration* of a public officer. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 183.

SECT. vii.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. WITH what sacred joy should we join in this *hymn of praise!*
67 The blessings celebrated in it were not peculiar to the family
of *Zacharias* or to the house of *Israel;* but we, through the
68 Divine Goodness, have our share in them: *the Lord God of Israel*
hath visited and redeemed us. He hath *remembered his covenant*
with the pious *patriarchs* in favour of millions who are *their seed*
72, 73 only as *heirs of the faith of Abraham.*—To us hath he accomplished
70, 78 the words he had *spoken by his holy prophets,* and *through his*
tender mercies hath caused the *Sun of Righteousness* to arise upon
79 us; upon *us* who were once indeed *sitting in darkness and in the*
shadow of death; and whose ancestors, for many succeeding generations, were lost in ignorance, idolatry and wickedness. Let us bless the Lord, who hath *given* us *light;* and make it our daily prayer that it may be the happy means of *guiding our feet into the way of peace.*—Let us, with pleasure and thankfulness, receive
77 the *knowledge of salvation by the remission of our sins,* without which we shall never see it but at an unapproachable distance.

Let us repose our chearful confidence in this Almighty Saviour,
69 this *Horn of Salvation,* which God's own right-hand hath *raised up*
for us: through him let us seek the pardon of our sins and
74 *deliverance* from all the *enemies* of our souls. And let a grateful sense of his redeeming love engage us resolutely to walk in the
75 strictest *holiness and righteousness,* as in the presence of God, and carefully to maintain *before him* a conscience void of offence *all the days of our lives.*

80 May we carry this temper along with us into solitude and retirement: may it animate us in the busiest scenes of life; and, in every particular instance, may it determine us in our choice of either and regulate our conduct in both!

SECT. VIII.

Joseph's suspicions concerning Mary removed by the appearance of an angel to him. Mat. I. 18, *to the end.*

MAT. I. 18.

SECT. viii.

AND *now,* having given an account of *the birth* of John, afterwards surnamed the Baptist, we proceed to that *of JESUS CHRIST,* the great subject of our history, which was attended with the most surprising circumstances, and *was thus* introduced. *His mother Mary being contracted to Joseph,* according to the method of the Jewish espousals, *before they came* to cohabit *together* as man and wife, *she was found* to be

Mat I. 18.

MAT. I. 18.

NOW the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

be *with child*; and this pregnancy was (as we have been informed above) *by* the miraculous operation of *the Holy Spirit*. *Now Joseph her husband, being a righteous man*[a], perceiving there was something very extraordinary in the case, *and being by no means willing to expose her to public infamy*[b] by any severe prosecution, nevertheless was so confounded with the concurrence of the strange circumstances that attended this affair, as that, in order to secure the honour of his own character and to behave with all the tenderness that might be to a person that he loved, he *purposed* to himself *to have divorced her* as *privately* as the law of Moses would have allowed, that is, only in the presence of two witnesses and without assigning any particular cause.

Mat. I. 19.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

And as he was revolving these things in his mind during the night-season, full of the thoughts of what he was to do, he fell asleep; and, *behold, an angel of the Lord*[c] *appeared to him in a dream, and said* unto him, *Joseph, thou son of David*, (as being lineally descended from him) *fear not to take home Mary thy wife*, according to the espousals that have passed between you, though there may seem some danger of bringing a reflection on thyself and family; *for that which is begotten* and formed *in her, is* of no human original, but was produced by the miraculous and unexampled operation *of the Holy Spirit* himself. *And*, in consequence of it, when her time is fulfilled, *she*

20

20 But while he thought on these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost.

21

21 And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou

[a] *A righteous man.*] It is without any just reason that this text is often assigned as an instance where the word δικαιος is used to signify *merciful*, and some accordingly have here translated it *a good-natured man*. If we consider the information which Joseph might have received from persons of such an extraordinary character as Zacharias and Elizabeth, (who would certainly think themselves obliged to interpose on such an occasion, and whose story so remarkably carried its own evidence along with it) besides the intimation the prophecy of Isaiah gave, and the satisfaction he undoubtedly had in the virtuous character of Mary herself, we must conclude that he had acted a very severe and *unrighteous* part, had he proceeded to extremities without serious deliberation; and that *putting her away privately* would, in these circumstances, have been the hardest measure which *justice* would have suffered him to take.

[b] *To expose her to public infamy.*] It is very possible παραδειγματισαι may here refer to that exemplary punishment which the law inflicted on those who had violated the faith of their espousals before the marriage was completed: Deut. xxii. 23, 24. where it is expressly ordered that *a betrothed virgin*, if she lay with another man, *should be stoned*. We may suppose, however, that the infamy of a *public divorce*, though she had not been *stoned*, may also be expressed by the same word. But then there was besides, a *private* kind of *divorce*, in which no reason was assigned, and the dowry was not forfeited, as in the former case: and by this she would not have been so defamed. See *Selden. Ux. Heb.* lib. iii. cap. xvi. p. 302, 365, 366. and *Lightfoot. Hor. Heb. in loc.*

[c] *An angel of the Lord.*] Probably Gabriel, who had been sent to Zacharias and Mary. That Joseph's scruple did not proceed, as some of the *fathers* supposed, merely from veneration, appears from the reason given why he should take Mary, which in that case would have been the only reason against it.

[d] *Call*

SECT. viii.

she shall bring forth a Son; and thou, under whose protection and care he shall be placed during his infancy, *shalt call his name Jesus,*[d] that is, God the Saviour; *for he shall* prove that glorious and divine person intended by God to *save his people*, even all that truly believe in him, both *from* the punishment and the dominion of *their sins*, by procuring an ample pardon for them, and raising them, after a life of holiness on earth, to a state of complete perfection and happiness.

Mat. I. 21.

thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 *Now all this was done* (that is, this miraculous conception, together with all the circumstances proper to attend it, was effected) *that this* celebrated prophecy *might be accomplished*[e] *which the Lord had* so long before *spoken by the prophet* Isaiah, (Is. vii. 14.) *who said* to the house of David in the reign of Ahaz, when it seemed in the utmost danger of being destroyed,

22 (Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 "*Behold*, and attend to it with *a* becoming regard, while I assure you that God will accomplish a yet nobler work than what he is ready to perform in your deliverance from Pekah and the son of Tabeal; for an unspotted *virgin*, descended many ages hence from this royal family now to be rescued, *shall*, in a miraculous manner, *conceive, and bring forth a Son; and they shall call his name Emmanuel;*" *which, being translated, signifies God with us*, that is, God

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us.)

d *Call his name Jesus.*] Bishop Pearson seems to have set the etymology of this name in the clearest light, in his large discourse on it, (*Pearson on the Creed*, p. 69—71.) in which he endeavours to prove that JAH, one of the names of God, enters into the composition of the Hebrew name *Jehoshuah*, to which *Jesus* answers. (Compare Heb. iv. 8. where, by the way, I think it should have been rendered *if Joshua had given them rest.*) This derivation most plainly shews how Christ's being called *Jesus* was in effect an accomplishment of the prophecy that he should be called *Emmanuel.*

e *That this* prophecy *might be accomplished.*] Few are strangers to the objections which have been made against applying this prophecy to Christ, which drove Grotius and many others unhappily to suppose that it immediately related to the birth of a child of Isaiah's in a natural way, and only in a secondary sense referred to Christ. The controversy is too large for this place. I content myself with observing that a son's being born of one *then a virgin*, when she was married, was no such miraculous event as to answer such a pompous introduction; and that it seems most reasonable to interpret Isa. vii. 16. as referring to *Shearjashub*, whom Isaiah was ordered to take in his hand (ver. 3.) for no other imaginable reason but that something remarkable was to be said of him. So that the general sense, in short, is this: "You have affronted God by refusing a *sign* now; yet his transcendant mercy will make your present forfeited deliverance, (by the death of these confederate kings, which shall happen before [HANAHAR] *this child* in my hand is grown up to the exercise of reason) *a sign* of a much nobler deliverance by the *Messiah*, who shall be born of an immaculate *virgin*, and condescend to pass through the tender scenes of infancy as other children do." Compare Isa. vii. 10—16. And see *Bishop Chandler's* excellent remarks on this text, in his *Defence of Christianity*, page 325—331. *Mr. Green's* 4th Letter to *Mr. Collins*; and *Usher's Annals, A. M.* 3262.

f *Till*

God dwelling in our nature, on the most gracious and important design; a name in signification nearly equivalent to that of Jesus. SECT. viii.

Mat. i. 24.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife;

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born Son; and he called his name Jesus.

Then Joseph, arising from his sleep, with entire satisfaction and humble acknowledgment, *did as the angel of the Lord had appointed him; and* without any farther delay, *took home* Mary *his wife.* Nevertheless, in expectation of this wonderful event, *and* out of reverence to this sacred birth, *he knew her not* as a wife, though she dwelt under his roof; but she continued a pure virgin even *till she had brought forth her* divinely begotten *Son,* who on account of his distinguished glories, with peculiar propriety might be called *the first-born:*[t] *And,* according to the direction of the angel, *he called his name Jesus.* But several other circumstances, relating to this important event, will afterwards be recounted. 25

IMPROVEMENT.

We see here, in *Joseph,* an excellent pattern of gentleness and prudence. In an affair which appeared dubious, he chose, as we should always do, rather to err on the favourable, than on the severe extreme. He was careful to avoid any precipitate steps; and, in the moments of deliberation, God interposes to guide and determine his resolves. Ver. 19 20

With what wonder and pleasure did he receive these glad tidings! With what pleasure should we also receive them! For we too are informed of *Jesus* who came *to save his people from their sins.* An important and glorious salvation indeed! *Hosannah* to him that *cometh in the name of the Lord!* Blessed *Jesus!* answer thy character in delivering us not only from sin's condemning, but from its reigning power! 21

Let

[t] *Till she had brought forth her Son, the first-born.*] There seems to be some peculiar emphasis in the expression, τον υιον αυτης τον πρωτοτοκον, which justifies the turn I have given to the words. Compare Luke ii. 7. (where the very same words are used with a remarkable exactness;) Rom. viii. 29. Col. i. 15. and Heb. i. 6. —Though I confess the force of the learned and candid Dr. Daniel Scott's remarks on this *note* to be such as to convince me that this expression might have been used with regard to the *first-born son* of any family, and consequently, that no certain argument of Christ's superior dignity and glory can be drawn from it, yet, from the pen of one so deeply impressed with the thought of it as Luke as well as Matthew was, I think it may probably contain some references to it.—On what terms Joseph and Mary afterwards lived is of so little importance to us, that I cannot but wonder it should have been the subject of so much debate. It is sufficient for us to know that she was a *virgin,* not only at the time of Christ's conception, but at his birth, as the prophecy foretold she should be. The *evangelist* therefore wisely contented himself with recording this, without affirming any thing farther either way on this delicate subject: I say, *either way,* for that the manner of expression here used will not certainly prove that Mary had more children afterwards, appears from comparing Gen. xxviii. 15. 1 Sam. xv. 35. Job xxvii. 5. Psal. cx. 1. cxii. 8. and Mat. xii. 20.

[s] In

SECT. viii. Let our souls bow to *Emmanuel*, our incarnate God: and, while with holy wonder we survey the various scenes of his humiliation, let us remember too his native dignity and his divine glory. By Mat. I. 21. him God hath fulfilled his ancient promises in the most ample and glorious manner, *in the fulness of time sending forth his Son, made of a woman*, and sprung like *a tender shoot* from the decayed stock of *David* his servant.

22 While we study the oracles of the *Old Testament*, let us with pleasure trace the notices of the great *Messiah* there, even of *Jesus*, to whom *all the prophets give witness*. May *his name* be ever inscribed upon our hearts! In that *name* may we *lift up our banners*, and judge those reproaches a glory which we may meet with in his sacred cause [g]!

SECT. IX.

The genealogy of Christ from Abraham, as recorded by Matthew; and from Adam, as recorded by Luke. Mat. I. 1—17. Luke III. 23, *to the end.*

MAT. I. 1.

SECT. ix. BEFORE we proceed to the birth of this Divine Infant, whose conception was so Mat. I. 1. very remarkable, it will be proper to give some account of his descent according to the flesh. And we shall therefore introduce it with a table of *the genealogy of Jesus Christ*; [a] which is intended, not only as an introduction to his history, but more especially to shew that he was *the son of David*, and *the son of Abraham*, as it was often foretold the Messiah should be. (Compare Psal. cxxxii. 11. Isa. xi. 1. Jer. xxiii. 5. xxxiii. 15. and Gen. xii. 3. xxii. 18. xxvi. 4. xxviii. 14.)

Mat. I. 1. THE book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

2 Now it is well known that *Abraham*, that renowned patriarch and friend of God, from whom the whole Jewish nation had the honour to descend, *begat Isaac* in his old age, that son of Sarah, according to the promise, with whom God's covenant was established; *and Isaac begat Jacob*

2 Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren.

[g] In his sacred cause.] There was, humanly speaking, a probability that Joseph might have brought some suspicion on his character, or reflection on his family by admitting Mary in these circumstances.

[a] *The genealogy of Jesus Christ.*] I am well aware that the word γενεσις, and the Hebrew TILEDETH which corresponds to it, sometimes signifies the *history* of a person's *life* (as well as other things,) and not merely his *genealogy*; (compare Gen. i. 9. xxxviii. 2. Judith xiii. 18. Jam. i. 23. and iii. 6. Gr.) and that the learned Vitringa understands it so in this place: (See *Vitring. Observ.* Sacr. lib. i. dissert. i. pag. 39.) Yet, as it is much more frequently used in the latter sense (see Gen. v. 1. x. 1. xi. 10—27. xxv. 12. xxxvi. 1, 9. Numb. i. 20, &c. and Ruth iv. 18. in all which places it is applied to *genealogies*), I think it best, with the learned Dr. Scott, to render it as above; only giving a little hint of the more extensive sense the word may possibly bear.

[b] Till

SECT. IX.

Jacob, on whom also it was entailed in preference to Esau, though his elder brother; *and Jacob begat Judah and his* eleven *brethren*, who became the heads of their respective tribes. Mat. I. 3.

3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar, and Phares begat Esrom, and Esrom begat Aram;

And as Judah was the person to whom that extraordinary promise was made, that his descendants should continue a distinct tribe, with some form of government amongst them, till Shiloh, that is, the Messiah, came [b] (Gen. xlix. 10.) and as it was from him that Christ descended, we shall confine ourselves to the line of his posterity. We therefore add that *Judah begat Pharez, and* at the same time *Zarah* his twin-brother, *of Thamar*, who had been his son's wife; *and Pharez begat Esrom, and Esrom begat Aram;*

4 And Aram begat Aminidab, and Aminidab begat Naasson, and Naasson begat Salmon;

And Aram begat Aminidab, and Aminidab begat Naasson, who was prince of the tribe of Judah when the people were numbered and marshalled at mount Sinai (Numb. i. 7. x. 14.) *and Naasson begat Salmon.* 4

5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab, and Booz begat Obed of Ruth, and Obed begat Jesse;

And, after their settlement in Canaan, *Salmon begat Boaz of Rahab* [c], who had been a native of that country, but entertained the spies at Jericho, and, afterwards embracing the Jewish religion, had the honour to be thus incorporated with this noble family; *and Boaz* their son *begat Obed of Ruth*, the Moabitess [d], who had so resolutely chosen to adhere to the God and people of Israel; *and Obed*, in a very advanced age, *begat Jesse* [e]: 5

6 And Jesse begat David

And Jesse begat, besides several 6 elder

[b] **Till Shiloh, that is, the Messiah, came.]** This sense of Jacob's prophecy is so beautifully illustrated and so strongly asserted by the learned Dr. Sherlock, bishop of London, in his *Discourses on Prophecy*, Dissert. 3. page 317, &c. that, if I was writing on this passage of the Old Testament, I should have little to do but to refer my reader to it.

[c] *Of Rahab.*] It is not indeed expressly said she was Rahab of Jericho, commonly called *the harlot*; but I think there can be no room to doubt it, as we know she was contemporary with Salmon, and may conclude that she (this Rahab) was, as all the other women mentioned in this list, a remarkable person. Now there was no other of that name, especially of this age, of whom the compiler of this *table* could (so far as we can judge) suppose his reader to have any knowledge.

[d] *Booz begat Obed of Ruth* the Moabitess.] The son of a *Moabite*, by an *Israelitish woman*, could never be allowed to *enter into the congregation of the Lord*; that is, at least he was rendered incapable of being a *prince in Israel*, and perhaps even of being *naturalized by circumcision*; which may be the meaning of the phrase, Deut. xxiii. 3. (See Mr. *Lowman's Hebrew Government*, p. 130, *& seq.*) But it evidently appears, from this celebrated instance, that *this precept* was not understood as excluding the descendants of an *Israelite* by a *Moabitish woman* from any hereditary honours and privileges; otherwise, surely, Salmon, the son of Naasson, prince of Judah, would never have married Rahab, one of the accursed people of Canaan; nor would the kinsman of Boaz have wanted a much better reason than he assigned (Ruth iv. 6.) for refusing to marry Ruth when she became a widow.

[e] *Obed, in a very advanced age, begat Jesse.*] That Salmon, Boaz, and Obed, must each of them have been about an hundred years old at the birth of his son here recorded, hath been observed by many and is well accounted for by Dr. Whitby in particular: Annot. on ver. 4.

SECT. ix.

elder children, *David, the* celebrated *king* of Israel, who was favoured with the title of "The man after God's own heart," and had an express promise that the Messiah should descend from him; (compare 2 Sam. vii. 12—16. and Acts ii. 30.) *And David the king begat Solomon of* Bathsheba, who had before been [*the wife*] *of Uriah* the Hittite: and, though that holy man, in this unhappy affair, acted in a way most unworthy his character, yet God, on his deep repentance, graciously forgave him, and entailed the promise on his seed by her.

Mat. I. 6.

David the king, and David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias;

7 *And*, to go forward therefore with the genealogy according to this line, *Solomon begat Rehoboam*, from whose government the ten tribes revolted under Jeroboam the son of Nebat; *and Rehoboam begat Abijah; and Abijah begat Asa*, 8 whose reign was so long and prosperous: *And Asa begat* the good *Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat begat Jehoram*, who unhappily dishonoured the holy family by an alliance with Athaliah the daughter of Ahab, 2 Kings viii. 18.

7 And Solomon begat Roboam, and Roboam begat Abia, and Abia begat Asa;

8 And Asa begat Josaphat, and Josaphat begat Joram, and Joram begat Ozias;

And (to omit Ahaziah, the son of that wicked woman, whose impieties and cruelties rendered her so infamous, 2 Chron. xxiv. 7. the ungrateful Joash, her grandson, who murdered Zechariah the prophet, the son of his great benefactor Jehoida, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21, 22. and Amaziah, his son, who succeeded him) *Jehoram*, at the distance of the fourth generation, may be 9 said to have *begat Uzziah* the leper[f]. *And Uzziah begat Jotham; and Jotham begat* that wicked *Ahaz*, who, instead of being reformed by the chastising hand of God, trespassed yet more and more against him, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. *and Ahaz begat* the religious *Hezekiah*, that 10 distinguished favourite of heaven: *And Hezekiah begat Manasseh*, so remarkable once for his enormous wickedness and afterwards for his humble repentance; *and Manasseh begat* that infamous and hardened sinner, *Amon; and Amon begat Josiah*, that eminently pious prince, whose

9 And Ozias begat Joatham, and Joatham begat Achaz, and Achaz begat Ezekias;

10 And Ezekias begat Manasses, and Manasses begat Amon, and Amon begat Josias;

[f] *Jehoram* may be said to have *begat Uzziah.*] It is undeniably evident, from 2 Chron. chap. xxii. *and following*, that three princes are here omitted. If this *table* was taken from any public records amongst the Jews, the Evangelist does not seem responsible for the exactness of it: but, if he himself drew it up, I think it will be but modest in us to suppose that it was by some peculiar divine direction that the sin of Jehoram is thus animadverted upon even to the *fourth generation*; his intermediate descendants being thus blotted out of the records of Christ's family, and overlooked as if they had never been.

whose heart was so early and so tenderly impressed with an apprehension of God's approaching judgments: *And Josiah begat Jehoiakim and his* royal *brethren*, Jehoahaz and Zedekiah, who both of them were kings of Judah, the former predecessor to Jehoiakim, and the latter the successor of his son [g]: *and about the time of the Babylonish captivity, Jehoiakim begat* Jehoiachin, otherwise called *Jeconiah* [h], who was so long the prisoner of the Chaldeans.

SECT. IX.

Mat. I. 11.

11 And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel,

And, after the Babylonish captivity commenced, this *Jeconiah begat Salathiel* [i]; *and Salathiel begat*

12

[g] The successor of his son.] On the death of Josiah the people took Jehoahaz, otherwise called *Shallum*, though a younger brother, and made him king in his father's stead (2 Kings xxiii. 30, 31.) but Pharaoh-Necho, in three months time, deposed him and carried him captive to Egypt, according to the prediction of the prophet concerning him, (Jer. xxii. 10—12. compared with 2 Kings xxiii. 33, 34.) And, having thus deposed him, he made Jehoiakim, the elder brother, who was formerly called *Eliakim*, king in his room. But this Jehoiakim was soon subdued by the king of Babylon, who, after his conquest, suffered him for a while to continue on the throne; but, on his revolt to the king of Egypt again, he was slain by the Chaldeans (2 Kings xxiv. 1, 2), and thrown out unburied, as Josephus tells us, *(Antiq. lib.* x. *cap.* 6. [al. 8.] § 3. *Havercamp.)* agreeable to what the prophet had foretold, Jer. xxii. 18, 19. xxxvi. 30. After his death his son Jehoiachin, by some called *Jehoiakim the Second*, was put in his place; and this is he who is elsewhere called *Jeconiah*, 1 Chron. iii. 16. and *Coniah*, Jer. xxii. 24. But, after a reign of three months, he was taken captive and imprisoned by Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Kings xxiv. 8—16. (according to the prophecy, Jer. xxii. 24—26) and after thirty-seven years released, 2 Kings xxv. 27. In the mean time, upon his being deposed, his uncle Zedekiah, the third son of Josiah, was raised to the throne; but, after a reign of eleven years, his eyes were put out and he was carried captive to Babylon, Jerusalem and the temple being destroyed, 2 Kings xxiv. 17, 18. xxv. 7. I have traced and stated the matter thus particularly, chiefly because it is a key not only to the *paraphrase* on this text, but to much of the book of Jeremiah, which, as it is plain that several *chapters* of it are displaced, cannot be well understood without a very exact knowledge of the preceding history.

[h] *Jehoiakim begat Jeconiah.*] I here follow the reading of the Bodleian and other *manuscripts*, (notice of which is taken in the margin of our Bibles) Ιωσιας δε εγεννησε τον Ιωακειμ· Ιωακειμ δε εγεννησε τον Ιεχονιαν. And this indeed seems absolutely necessary, to keep up the number of *fourteen generations*; unless we suppose that the Jeconiah here is a different person from that Jeconiah mentioned in the next verse, which seems a very unreasonable supposition, since it is certain that throughout this whole *table*, each person is mentioned twice, first as the son of the preceding and then as the father of the following.---I am obliged to the candid animadversion of Dr. Scott for the small alteration I have made in my reading of this *verse* from what was published in the first edition.

[i] *Jeconiah begat Salathiel.*] I cannot take upon me certainly to determine whether Salathiel was the son of Jeconiah by descent or adoption. It is certain that Luke (chap. iii. 27.) derives Salathiel from David by Nathan, and not by Solomon, whose line might possibly fail in Jeconiah. And this would be most evidently congruous to Jerem. xxii. 30. where it is said that Jeconiah should be *written childless*, as we render it: But, as the dispersion of Jeconiah's seed is there threatened, and at least *seven sons* of his are reckoned up elsewhere, 1 Chron. iii. 17, 18, (supposing *Assir*, as the word signifies, to be only a kind of surname of *Jeconiah the captive)* a greater number than one could suppose so unhappy a prince would adopt in his imprisonment, I should rather think the word, translated *childless* in the fore-cited prophecy, signifies (as the *Seventy* suppose, who have translated it) ακαρπον, *naked, stripped,* or *rooted up*; and the more so, because it seems harsh to suppose εγεννησε should signify only *be adopted:* Yet I own it is something strange that Salathiel, who on this supposition was a descendant of Solomon, should be adopted by Neri, a descendant of Nathan, a younger and much inferior

SECT. IX.

begat Zerubbabel[k], that illustrious instrument of restoring and settling the Jewish commonwealth on their return from the captivity:

Mat. I. 13. *And Zerubbabel begat Abiud*[l]*; and Abiud begat*
14 *Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor: And Azor begat Zadok; and Zadok begat Achim; and*
15 *Achim begat Eliud: And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat*
16 *Jacob: And* this *Jacob begat Joseph*, who was *the husband of Mary*, that blessed virgin, *of whom was born*, by the immediate power of God, *Jesus, who is* commonly *called Christ*, as he was indeed God's Messiah, or anointed One; the great Sovereign and Prophet and High Priest of his Church, completely furnished for the discharge of all those offices by a most plentiful effusion of the Spirit which was given, not by measure, to him.

17 This is the genealogy of his reputed father *so that* we see, as it here stands, that *all the generations*, in the first interval or class of this illustrious family, *from Abraham to David*, when we may look upon it as in its rising state, *are fourteen*

Salathiel, and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;

13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud, and Abiud begat Eliakim, and Eliakim begat Azor;

14 And Azor begat Sadoc, and Sadoc begat Achim, and Achim begat Eliud;

15 And Eliud begat Eleazer, and Eleazer begat Matthan, and Matthan begat Jacob;

16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations;

inferior branch of David's family; or that it should be said by Jeremiah that *none of Jeconiah's seed should rule any more in Judah*, if Zerubbabel, their first ruler after the captivity, was at farthest but his great-grandson. On the whole, I submit so difficult a question to the determination of abler judges, and content myself with thus hinting at what I found most material on either side. If the two *genealogies* do not speak of different persons that were named alike, I should conjecture that Salathiel, the son of Neri, might marry the daughter of Jeconiah, and might possibly, on that account, be also *adopted* by him. The attentive reader will see that this hypothesis at least softens the difficulties inseparable from either of the former.

[k] *Salathiel begat Zerubbabel.*] This illustrious person, Zerubbabel, is so often said to have been the son of *Salathiel*, or *Shealtiel*, which is so nearly the same, (and accordingly the Syriac here reads *Schaltiel*) see Ezra iii. 2, 8. v. 2. Hag. i. 1, 12, 14. ii. 23. that I incline more and more to think, with Brennius, that the Zerubbabel mentioned, 1 Chron. iii. 17—19, as the son of Pedaiah the brother of Salathiel, was a different person from this. As the name *Zerubbabel* signifies *a stranger in Babylon*, it is no wonder that it should be given to several children born in the captivity.—If this solution be not allowed, I see not how the known difficulty here can be removed unless by acknowledging that the books of Chronicles (the author of which is unknown) may have suffered by the injuries of time, so that the *present reading* of some passages may be *incorrect*; which is very consistent with owning the plenary *inspiration* of those books. By allowing this we should fairly get rid of *two parts in three* of the seeming contradictions in the writings of the *Old Testament*, (I speak on an accurate review of them,) and should be free from the sad necessity of such *evasive criticisms*, as are more likely to pain a candid heart than to satisfy an attentive and penetrating mind. The omission of a word or two in a *genealogical table*, and sometimes the mistake of a letter or two in *transcribing*, especially with regard to names or numbers, occasions many inextricable difficulties where, in the *original reading*, all might be perfectly clear.

[l] *Zerubbabel begat Abiud.*] Rhesa, mentioned by Luke, chap. iii. ver. 27. was probably another son of Zerubbabel. Abiud might possibly be the same with Meshullam, whose name is mentioned in 1 Chron. iii. 19. or perhaps he and his descendants falling into obscurity, their names might be no where preserved but in this *genealogy* of Joseph's family, which the *evangelist* transcribed as he found it.

[m] They

nations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ *are* fourteen generations.

fourteen generations: and after these, in the next class, *from David to the Babylonish captivity*, when it was seated on the throne, and may be reckoned as in its flourishing state, we may compute them as amounting to the same number; and, to consider them as they are represented here, they may again be counted *fourteen generations*[n]: *and*, in like manner, in the last class, *from the Babylonish captivity to Christ*, when by degrees it sunk into obscurity, and manifestly was in its declining state, then also we may reckon them as *fourteen generations*. SECT. ix. Mat. I. 17.

Luke III. 23. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was *the son* of Heli, 24 Which

Luke III. 23.

But, though we have thus given the legal genealogy of Christ from Abraham, as derived from Joseph his reputed father, we shall yet add another that ascends to Adam; *and* this is the account which Luke hath given us in his gospel; where, after he had spoken of the baptism of *Jesus when* he was *beginning* [*his* public *ministry*,] and *was about thirty years of age*, he traces his descent in the line of Mary[n], whose father Heli adopting Joseph, whom he made his son-in-law, the descent of Joseph may on that account be reckoned from him, and so is in effect the same with that of Mary. Christ therefore, *being* born of Mary after her espousals, may be considered, upon this account, to be *(as* at that time he commonly *was reckoned) the son of Joseph*, who, by adoption, or rather by the marriage of his daughter, was the son *of Heli*[o], The son *of Mat-* Luke III. 23.

[n] They may be counted *fourteen generations.*] I express it with this latitude, as it is manifest that three persons are omitted in the *second class* between Jehoram and Uzziah, ver. 8. and it is only by counting them as here represented that they make *fourteen generations.* And if, according to the reading of the *Bodleian*, Jehoiakim be introduced in ver. 11, and considered as the last of this class, (which seems the better reading, as Jeconiah does not appear to have had any brethren,) Jeconiah will thus be reserved for the *third class*, which otherwise would want one person to complete the number.

[n] In the line of Mary.] I am aware that Mr. Le Clerc and many other learned men have thought that Joseph was begotten by Heli, and adopted by Jacob: but I much rather conclude that he was adopted by Heli, or rather taken by him for his son upon the marriage of his daughter, and that Heli was the father of Mary; because an ancient *Jewish Rabbi* expressly calls her *the daughter of Heli*; and chiefly, because else we have indeed no true *genealogy of Christ* at all, but only two different views of the line of Joseph his reputed father; which would by no means prove that *Christ*, who was only by adoption his son, was of *the seed of Abraham* and of *the house of David.* Yet the apostle speaks of it as *evident* that *Christ* was descended from Judah, Heb. vii. 14. in which, if this gospel were (as antiquity assures us) written by the direction of Paul, perhaps he may refer to this very *table* before us. (See Mr. *Whiston's Harmony of the four Evangelists*, Prop. xvi. p. 175, *& seq.)*

[o] *Joseph*, who by adoption, or rather by the marriage of his daughter, was the son *of*

SECT. IX.

Luke III. 24.

Matthat, the son *of Levi*, the son *of Melchi*, the son *of Jannah*, the son *of Joseph*. The son *of Mattathias*, the son *of Amos*, the son *of Nahum*, the son *of Eli*, the son *of Naggia*, The son *of Maath*, the son *of Mattathias*, the son *of Shemei*, the son *of Joseph*, the son *of Judah*, The son *of Johannah*, the son *of Rhesa*, the son *of Zerubbabel*, the son *of Salathiel*, the son *of Neri*,[p] The son *of Melchi*, the son *of Addi*, the son *of Cosam*, the son *of Elmodam*, the son *of Er*, The son *of Joses*, the son *of Eliezer*, the son *of Jorim*, the son *of Matthat*, the son *of Levi*, The son *of Simeon*, the son *of Judah*, the son *of Joseph*, the son *of Jonan*, the son *of Eliakim*, The son *of Meleah*, the son *of Mainan*, the son *of Mattathias*, the son *of Nathan*, the son *of* that celebrated king of Israel, *David*, the man after God's own heart, The son *of Jesse*, the son *of Obed*, the son *of Boaz*, the son *of Salmon*, the son *of Naasson*, The son *of Aminadab*, the son *of Aram*, the son *of Esrom*, the son *of Pharez*, the son *of Judah*, The son *of Jacob*, the son *of Isaac*, who was, according to the promise, the son *of* that honourable patriarch *Abraham*, the son *of Terah*, the son *of Nahor*, The son *of Serug*, the son *of* Ragau, or *Reu*, the son *of Peleg*, the son *of Heber*, the son *of Salah*, The son *of Cainan*,[q] the son *of Arphaxad*, the son *of Shem*, the

24 Which was *the* son of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi, which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the* son of Janna, which was *the son* of Joseph, 25 Which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Amos, which was *the son* of Naum, which was *the* son of Esli, which was *the son* of Nagge, 26 Which was *the son* of Maath, which was *the* son of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Semei, which was *the* son of Joseph, which was *the son* of Juda, 27 Which was *the son* of Joanna, which was *the* son of Rhesa, which was *the son* of Zorobabel, which was *the son* of Salathiel which was *the son* of Neri, 28 Which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the* son of Addi, which was *the son* of Cosam, which was *the son* of Elmodam, which was *the* son of Er, 29 Which was *the son* of Jose, which was *the son* of Eliezer, which was *the* son of Jorim, which was

the son of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi, 30 Which was *the son* of Simeon, which was *the son* of Juda, which *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Jonan, which was *the son* of Eliakim, 31 Which was *the son* of Melea, which was *the son* of Menan, which was *the son* of Mattatha, which was *the son* of Nathan, which was *the son* of David, 32 Which was *the son* of Jesse, which was *the son* of Obed, which was *the son* of Boaz, which was *the son* of Salmon, which was *the son* of Naasson, 33 Which was *the son* of Aminadab, which was *the son* of Aram, which was *the son* of Esrom, which was *the son* of Phares, which was *the son* of Juda, 34 Which was *the son* of Jacob, which was *the son* of Isaac, which was *the son* of Abraham, which was the *son of* Thara, which was *the son* of Nachor, 35 Which was *the son* of Saruch, which was *the son* of Ragau, which was *the son* of Phalec, which was *the son* of Heber, which was *the son* of Sala, 36 which was *the son* of Cainan, which was *the son* of Arphaxad, which was *the son* of

of Heli.] It is necessary to take the words in this latitude, because the true *father of Joseph* appears to have been Jacob or James, the son of Matthan. See Matt. i. 15, 16.

[p] The son *of Neri.*] See the latter part of note [i], page 58.

[q] The son *of Cainan.*] There is no mention made of this Cainan in either of the *genealogies* that Moses gives us, Gen. x. 24; and xi. 12; but Salah is there said to be the son of Arphaxad. Cainan must therefore have been introduced here from the *translation* of the *Seventy interpreters*, who have inserted him in both these places in the same order as we find him here; and, as this *translation* was then commonly used and was more generally understood than the *Hebrew*, it is probable that some transcriber of this gospel added Cainan from that version, unless we suppose that Luke himself might choose, in writing this *genealogy*, to follow the *Septuagint*, as he appears to do in several other passages that he has quoted from the *Old Testament*. Nor is it, after all, a point of any consequence, as the design of the *Evangelist* was only to present us with the *genealogy of Christ* in its ascent to Adam, which is equally

of Sem, which was *the son* of Noe, which was *the son* of Lamech, 37 Which was *the son* of Mathusala, which was *the son* of Enoch, which was *the son* of Jared, which was *the son* of Maleleel, which was *the son* of Cainan, 38 Which was *the son* of Enos, which was *the son* of Seth, which was *the son* of Adam, which was *the son* of God.

the son *of Noah*, with whom he was preserved in the ark, and it is well known that Noah was the son *of Lamech*. The son *of Methusaleh*, the son *of Enoch*, who was translated without dying, and was the son *of Jared*, the son *of Mahalaleel*, the son *of Cainan*. The son *of Enos*, the son *of Seth*, the son *of Adam*, who, being descended from no human parents, but formed by the immediate power of a Divine Creating Hand, might, with peculiar propriety, be called [*the son*] *of God*, in his original state, the heir of immortality and glory.

SECT. IX.

Luke III. 37.

38

IMPROVEMENT.

When we survey any such series of generations, it is obvious to reflect how *like the leaves of a tree, one passeth away and another cometh*; yet *the earth still abideth*, and with it the goodness of the Lord, which runs on, from generation to generation, the common hope of parents and children.

Mat. i. 1. *& seq.*

Of those who formerly lived upon earth, and perhaps made the most conspicuous figure among the children of men, how many have there been whose *names* have perished with them! and how many of whom nothing but their *names* are remaining! Thus are *we* passing away, and thus shall we be shortly forgotten. Happy if, while we are forgotten of men, we are remembered by God, and our *names* are found *written in the book of life!* There they will make a much brighter appearance than in the records of fame, or than they would do even in such a catalogue of those who were related to *Christ according to the flesh*; whose memory is here preserved, when that of many, who were once the wonder and terror of the mighty in the land of the living, is lost in perpetual oblivion.

Mat. i. 13. *& seq.*

Luke iii. 24. *& seq.*

We observe, among these ancestors of *Christ*, some that were *Heathens*, and others that, on different accounts, were of *infamous characters*; and perhaps it might be the design of Providence that we should learn from it, or at least should, on reading it, take occasion to reflect that persons of all nations, and even *the chief of*

Mat. i. 3, 5, 6.

equally clear, whether we reckon Salah as the immediate descendant of Arphaxad, or whether we consider him as his grandson by Cainan.—And much less reason is there to object to the apparent difference there is between the *names* that Luke has given us and those we meet with of the same persons in the *Old Testament*: This is no more than what is usual when the same *names* are mentioned in a different language; nor will the *Greek* admit them to be so expressed as to agree exactly with the *Hebrew*. But to avoid confusion, I have rather chosen, both in the former *genealogy* and this, to give the *names* that are delivered in the *Old Testament* as they are written in the *Hebrew*, to which our language will admit us to come nearer than the *Greek* could do, and which must be allowed to be the more exact and truer method of pronouncing them. Compare Gen. v. 3, *& seq.* xi. 10—27. and 1 Chron. i. 1—27.

SECT. IX.

of sinners amongst them, are encouraged to trust in him as their Saviour. *To him* therefore let us *look* even from *the ends of the earth*, yea from the depths of guilt and distress, and the consequence will be happy beyond all expression or conception.

Mat. i. 3. 5, 6. Luke iii. ult.

Adam, though originally *the son of God*, lost that inheritance of life and glory, which, in consequence of such a relation, he might reasonably have expected; but the *second Adam* repairs the loss which we had sustained by the transgression of the *first*. We are now *predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ*, and raised by him to the hope of a fairer inheritance than the terrestrial Paradise. Let it be our daily labour to secure this invaluable blessing; that so, as we have *borne the image of the earthly Adam*, we may in due time *bear the image of the heavenly*, and at length attain to the perfect *manifestation of the sons of God*.

SECT. X.

Christ is born at Bethlehem, and his birth revealed by an angel to some shepherds in the neighbourhood of that town; and he is circumcised on the eighth day. Luke II. 1—21.

SECT. X.

Luke II. 1.

NOW it came to pass in those days, or about the time in which John the Baptist was born and Christ conceived in the manner related above, *that* the Roman Emperor, *Augustus Cæsar, published an edict*, or decree, *that all the land*[a] of Judea, which was then united under one prince and governed by Herod, *should be* publicly *enrolled*; or that the number of its inhabitants, both male and female, with their families and estates, should be registered. This he ordered, as a token of his particular displeasure against Herod their king, and as an intimation that he intended quickly to lay them under a tax.

Luke II. 1.

AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2 *And* here we may observe by the way, that *this was the first enrolment* of the Jews, and was committed to the care *of Cyrenius*, or, as the Latins write it, Quirinius, a Roman senator; who, being [*afterwards*] *governor of Syria*,[b] made

2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.

a

[a] *All the land.*] Though οικουμενη doth undoubtedly sometimes signify *the whole world* (Acts xvii. 31. Rom. x. 18. and Heb. i. 6,) and sometimes probably *the Roman empire* (as more especially in Rev. iii. 10. and xvi. 14.) see *Elsner, in loc.* yet I think the learned and ingenious Dr. Lardner hath fully proved that it is to be taken in a more limited sense both here and Acts xi. 28. as it plainly is, Luke xxi. 26. (See *Lardn. Credib. of Gosp. Hist.* Part I. Vol. I. page 542, and Vol. II. p. 574, &c. *seq.*) It is with peculiar propriety called *the whole land*, as it was soon after dismembered; and Nazareth, where Christ's parents dwelt, was in a different division from Bethlehem, as Dr. Lardner well observes.—That απογραφη signifies a *public enrollment*, Elsner, on this text, hath evidently shewn.

[b] And *this was the first enrolment of Cyrenius*,

a second enrolment or taxation, which was so famous in the Jewish history for the tumults that attended it. *And all* the inhabitants of Judea were obliged to obey the edict, and *went each of them to his own* native *city*, or the place where his paternal inheritance lay [c], *to be enrolled*: a circumstance wisely ordered by Providence to verify the truth of ancient prophecies and introduce the promised Messiah; as, by their coming to be thus registered among the subjects of the Roman empire, the subjection of the Jews to the Romans very remarkably appeared.

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out

4 *And* thus the parents of Christ were providentially brought to Bethlehem, the place where the

Cyrenius, afterwards *governor of Syria*. Αὕτη ἀπογραφὴ πρώτη ἐγένετο ἡγεμονεύοντος τῆς Συρίας Κυρηνίου.] The worthy person whom I mentioned above, Dr. Lardner, in his unequalled criticisms on this text, (Part I. Vol. II. page 718. *& seq.*) has given the reasons at large which determined me to prefer that literal *version* I have inserted. Our own is plainly mistaken, and is indeed hardly intelligible. The words might perhaps have been rendered, *This enrolment was before Cyrenius was governor of Syria*; which, to be sure is a true assertion, and may perhaps, after all, be vindicated; but I think the *original* expresses something more. Others have chosen to render it, *And the taxation* that was consequent upon this enrolment *was first executed when Cyrenius was governor of Syria*.—If none of those solutions proposed could be allowed (as I think, either of these justly may), it would be a thousand times more reasonable to suppose a word omitted by some early transcriber, (perhaps ἡ δευτέρα, after ἐγένετο,) than to think that so accurate a writer as Luke, were he to be considered only as a common historian, should make such a gross mistake as to confound this *enrolment*, in the reign of Herod, with that *taxation* which happened, several years after, on the banishment of his son Archelaus. A fact of this kind was too obvious, and, I may add, too mortifying to the whole Jewish nation to be so soon forgot; not to say that so strict a Pharisee as St. Paul, (who probably reviewed this gospel,) educated by Gamaliel, would be sure to remember it with some peculiar emotion. —Of the tumults that happened *in the days of the taxing*, which was afterwards made by Cyrenius, (when, on the banishment of Archelaus, Judea was reduced to the form of a province, and annexed to Syria under the government of Cyrenius,) in opposition to which a disturbance was raised by Judas of Galilee, see *Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib.* xvii. *in fin. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 1. § 1. *Bel. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 8. § 1. and Acts v. 37.

[c] Where his paternal inheritance lay.] Some have conjectured that Joseph might have a small estate here: but that is, at best, very uncertain; at least it is improbable that Jesus inherited it (Mat. viii. 20,) or that his mother enjoyed it during her widowhood. See John xix. 26, 27. —It is true, indeed, that had the original settlement of the divine law been duly regarded, *estates* in the land of promise would have been *unalienable*; and every male descended from Jacob, and not of the tribe of Levi, must have been born heir to a certain portion of land allotted to some of his ancestors when the division was first made; on which, however it might have been *mortgaged*, he must, if his father were dead, have entered at the next *jubilee*, if he lived to see it. But things were now fallen into confusion. The small remains of the *ten tribes*, who were brought back at all, were, after their return from the captivity, incorporated together in the neighbourhood of Judea, while *strangers* were in possession of large tracts of land once theirs; and the whole country of Samaria was in the hands of those whom the Jews looked upon *as the vilest kind of Gentiles*, that is, the *Samaritans*.—All that appears as to the circumstances now before us is, that every one was obliged to be *enrolled* at the place to which his family belonged; and the obedience of the Jews to this decree is a plain proof that they were now dependant on the Romans, and *the sceptre* was *departing from Judah*. See *Lightfoot's Harmony* on Luke ii. 1. and compare Gen. xlix. 10. and Numb. xxiv. 24.

SECT. X.

Luke II. 4.

the Messiah was to be born, without leaving any room to suspect them of artifice and design: for, being thus obliged by the emperor's authority, *Joseph went up from Galilee*, even *out of the city of Nazareth*, where he then dwelt, *into* the land of *Judea*, most properly so called, *to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem*, which was the town where his ancestors had formerly been settled: *(for*, notwithstanding Joseph was reduced so low as to follow the trade of a carpenter, yet *he was* originally *of the family and* royal *household of David:)*[d] It was to Bethlehem therefore
5 that he went up *to be enrolled;* and thither he took *with* him, by divine direction[e], *Mary his espoused wife, who was* now *big with child*, and very near the time of her delivery.

But the town was so crowded on this occasion, that they were obliged to lodge in the stable of a public house; though, in her present circumstances, it was so very inconvenient for her.
6 *And so it was that, while they were there*, either waiting for the proper officer who was to register the people, or staying till their own turn came, *the days* of her pregnancy *were fulfilled*, and the
7 time came *that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her Son*, even him that justly bears the character of *the First Born*[f]; that glorious and excellent Person, who was the First-born of every creature, and the Heir of all things. *And* she no sooner was delivered, but immediately she *swathed him;* being so miraculously strengthened by God, in this hour of extremity, as to be able to perform that office herself[g]; *and*, having no

out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David,)

5 To be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered:

7 And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and

d *Of the family and* royal *household of David.*] I have here rendered οἰκου *family, and* παλατια *household;* because I apprehend, with Grotius, that it may refer to the divisions of the tribes into *families* and *households*. Compare Numb i. 18. *& seq.* and Josh. vii. 17, 18. In this sense of the words, after having told us that Joseph was *of the house of David*, it would have been very unnecessary to add he was also *of his family;* but it was not at all improper to say he was of his *family* and *household* too: for all the descendants of Eliab and his other brethren, if there were any such remaining, would have been of *David's family*, yet not of his *household*. If the word *lineage* only signified descendants, it would be exceeding proper to give Luke's sense; but, as I apprehend it includes collateral branches, I thought fit to change it.

e By divine direction.] One could hardly imagine he would otherwise have exposed her to the hazards of such a journey at so unseasonable a time; for, whatever the Emperor's commands were, such a case as Mary's must, to be sure, have been admitted as an excuse for her not complying with it.

f *The First-born.*] See before the *paraphrase* and *note* f on Mat. i. 25. *Sect.* 8.

g Being so miraculously strengthened, &c.] I had, in the *first edition*, here and in many other places, inserted the word *probably* in the *paraphrase:* but, on the whole, considering that in all such performances the *author*, and not the *paraphrast*, is supposed to speak, I judge it more proper here to remind my reader (as I have elsewhere intimated) that he is to take it for granted I do not pretend in this instance, and a great many others,

to

and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

no other conveniency near, she *laid him in a manger* which belonged to one of the stalls there[h]; *because* (as we have just now said) *there was no room for them in* any of the chambers belonging to *the inn.*

SECT. X.

Luke II. 7.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night:

8 *And there were* some *shepherds in that country* who were then *lying out in the field and watching*, in their turns, *over their flocks by night*[i]; which it was necessary they should do, to guard against the wolves and other beasts of prey which were common there.

9 And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

9 *And, behold,* on a sudden, *an angel of the Lord came upon them,* and appeared in a visible form, standing in the air over their heads; *and* their eyes were immediately directed to it by *the glory of the Lord,* which *shone round about them* with such incomparable lustre, as had in former ages been the usual symbol of the Divine Presence: *And they were exceedingly terrified* at so uncommon and so awful an appearance.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people:

10 *And,* while they stood in silent amazement, *the angel said unto them,* in the mildest and most condescending manner, *Be not affrighted,* O ye shepherds! *for* the design of my appearance to you hath nothing terrible in it; but, on the contrary, *behold,* and take the most thankful notice of it, *I bring you good news,* and greet you with the tidings *of great* and universal *joy, which shall be* now occasioned, not only to you, but *to all people* in the whole Jewish nation, yea, and to all the human race.

11 For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

11 *For this* very *day,* this welcome blessed day, *there is born unto you,*[k] and unto all nations, *a* Glorious *Saviour,*

to speak confidently; but that the *different character,* which distinguishes the divine *text* from my fallible, though upright attempts to illustrate it, must guide him in determining what is *certain,* and what only *probable,* and perhaps, after all, *very doubtful.*

h *A manger* which belonged to one of the stalls there.] Though Heinsius has learnedly proved that φάτνη sometimes signifies *a stall,* yet it is certain that more frequently it signifies *a manger;* and the *manger* was the most proper part of the *stall* in which the Infant could be laid. If (as *tradition* says) this *stable* was cut out of a rock, the coldness of it must, at least by night, have greatly added to its other inconveniences.

i *Watching* in their turns *over their flock by night.*] The *original* φυλασσοντες φυλακας τας νυκτος, might more literally be rendered, *keeping the watches of the night;* which intimates their taking it *by turns* to watch, according to the usual divisions of the night. And as it is not probable that they exposed their flocks to the coldness of *winter-nights* in that climate where, as Dr. Shaw has shewn, they were so very unwholesome (see *Shaw's Travels,* p. 379), it may be strongly argued, from this circumstance, that those who have fixed upon December for the birth of Christ have been mistaken in the time of it.

k *There is born unto you.*] That one of the Bodleian manuscripts reads it, ημιν *to us,* is of very little weight, considering the consent of *copies* on the other side; and affords but a very slender support to Mr. Fleming's conjecture, that this was a glorified *human spirit,* perhaps that of Adam, all whose happy descendants might, he thinks, make up the chorus. (*Fleming's Christology,* vol. I. p. 80.) I should rather imagine, with Grotius, that this angel was Gabriel.

l *Glory*

SECT. X.

Saviour, *who is* even *Christ the Lord*, that Illustrious sovereign, whom you have so long been taught to expect, by the title and under the character of the MESSIAH: He is even now born *in the* neighbouring *city of David* his royal father; and I call you to offer him your earliest homage. Go, therefore, into the town without any farther delay, *and* inquire after him: for

Luke II. 11.

12 [*this shall be*] *a sign unto you*, by which you will easily know him: *you will find* him *an infant in swaddling bands*, *lying in a manger* belonging to one of the inns.

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you; ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger.

13 *And immediately*, to confirm them in the belief of so strange a truth as that this illustrious Prince should be born in such mean circumstances as he had now described, *there was* seen *with the angel* that spake to them *a* great *multitude of the celestial army praising God*, *and saying*, in the most cheerful and harmonious accents,

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying,

14 *Glory* be *to God in the highest* heavens, *and* let all the angelic legions resound his praises in the most exalted strains: for with the Redeemer's birth *peace* and all kinds of happiness come down to dwell *on earth*; yea, the overflowings of divine *benevolence* and favour are now exercised *towards* sinful *men*,[1] who, through this Saviour, become

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.

[1] *Glory to God in the highest; and peace on earth; benevolence* and favour *towards men.*] I am well aware of the ambiguity of these words. I do not mean as to the *reading*: For though the Alexandrian, and other manuscripts, instead of εὐδοκια, give it εὐδοκιας, as if the angels were proclaiming *peace* to *men of favour and good-will*, or unto those who were the objects of the divine benevolence and complacency; (which is a *reading* that has been approved by many learned men, and in particular by Beza;) yet I think the authority of that is overborne by the more general consent of the most ancient *manuscripts*, as well as by the *versions* of the oldest date, and the *quotations* of the *fathers* in the most early ages, which almost universally oppose it. (See *Mill* and *Grotius* on the place.) But, taking the *original* as it stands, Δοξα εν υψιστοις Θεω, και επι γης ειρηνη, εν ανθρωποις ευδοκια, we must allow it to be capable of different *senses*.—Some chuse to render it *Glory to God in the highest*, (that is, in heaven,) *and on earth; peace*, yea *favour*, *towards men*: But then, I think, instead of εν υψιστοις, it rather would have been εν ὑψεσιν; for so it is always usual to express, *in heaven and upon earth*. (Compare Mat. vi. 10. Luke xi. 2. 1 Cor. viii. 5. Eph. i. 10. iii. 15. Col. i. 16. 20. Rev. v. 3, 13.)—Others have given as the sense of it, that *the good-will*, or favour, which is now shewn *to men*, is *the glory of God in the highest*, *and* is *the peace* or happiness of those that dwell *on earth*: And this indeed is an important sense, and the *original* well enough will bear it. But thus to change the *doxology* into a kind of *proverb* or *aphorism*, seems to destroy much of its beauty.—I rather think that they are all to be considered as the words of a rejoicing acclamation, and that they strongly represent the piety and benevolence of these heavenly spirits, and their affectionate good wishes for the prosperity of the Messiah's kingdom. (Compare Mat. xxi. 9. Mark xi. 10. and especially Luke xix. 38.) The *new translation* that has been *lately* published, where it is rendered, *to men on earth*, *felicity in the divine favour*, does indeed express the sense of the two latter clauses, but by no means with equal ardour. The shouts of a multitude are generally broken into short sentences, and are commonly *elliptic*; which is the only cause of the ambiguity here. As this beauty could not be preserved in a *paraphrase*, I have repeated the words, after they had been explained.

become the objects of his complacential delight: Echo it back, O ye mortal abodes, to ours! "Glory to God in the highest! on earth "peace! benevolence and favour unto men!" SECT. X. Luke II. 14.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And it came to pass that, as soon as the angels departed from them, and returned back *into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Come let us go* immediately *to Bethlehem, and see this* great *thing which is done,* even this wonderful and important event *which the Lord hath* so graciously *made known unto us.* 15

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

And, accordingly, with one consent, *they came in haste,* before the night was over, leaving their flocks to the care of Providence; *and,* entering into the town, they followed the direction which the angel gave them, and quickly *found Mary and Joseph, and the* new-born *Infant* with them, just in the circumstance which had been described, *lying in a manger.* 16

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

And, when they had viewed this scene of wonders and had attentively considered [*it*,] they humbly paid their dutiful respects unto their new-born Saviour; and having acquainted his parents with the marvellous vision they had seen, *they* immediately *published abroad* a full account of this remarkable occurrence, and gave a particular relation of the whole of *that which had been told them,* in so wonderful a way, *concerning this Child.* 17

18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

And, upon hearing this strange account there was a general surprise; and, though they were prevented, by the meanness of his birth, from shewing a due regard to one that made no better an appearance, yet *all that heard* [*it*] *were astonished at those things which were related to them by the shepherds* on this subject. 18

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

But Mary in particular *treasured up all these things,* and carefully retained them in her memory; and though she did not blaze them abroad among the populace, or make any vain boast of such extraordinary favours and testimonies, yet she attentively regarded all these wonderful events, *entering into the meaning* [*of them*] *in* the secret reflections of *her heart*[m], and improving them all, as a further confirmation of what had been before revealed to her, and a foundation for the early acting of her faith and reverence towards her Divine Son. 19

And

Entering into the meaning, &c.] I apprehend Elsner has abundantly vindicated this sense of the word συμβαλλων, in his *note* on this place.

SECT. X.

Luke II. 20. *And the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen* at Bethlehem,[n] so perfectly agreeable in every circumstance to the account they had received but just before, *as it was told unto them* by the angel; admiring the mercy of God in sending such a Saviour and his condescension in favouring them with such early discoveries of him.

20 And the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

21 *And when eight days* from the birth of this Holy Infant *were fulfilled*, (that is, when the eighth day was come,) his pious parents failed not, according to the Mosaic law, under which they were placed, *to circumcise the Child*, that so, though he had not any corruptions of nature to mortify, which was in part represented by that institution, he might nevertheless, in a regular manner be initiated into the Jewish Church and thereby be engaged to the duties and intitled to the privileges of a son of Abraham, according to that covenant. And *his name was called JESUS*[o] that is, the Divine Saviour; a name *by which the angel had called him before he was conceived in the womb* of his virgin mother.

21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 6, 7 With what humble amazement should we contemplate this first appearance of our Incarnate Redeemer! Surely all the angels of heaven might justly have admired his condescension in assuming such a nature as ours and wearing a mortal frame, though it had been attended with all the ornaments and splendors earth could have given it. Though, at his entrance into our low world, he had been born of an imperial family, placed under a canopy of velvet and gold, or laid to repose on pillows of down, all this had been deep abasement in the eyes of those who had beheld the glories of his celestial throne and the honours paid him by *cherubims* and *seraphims*: But, behold, the Son of God, and the Heir of all things, is not merely in the abodes of *men*, but in a place destined for *beasts*, and, while, *wrapped in swaddling-clothes*, is *laid in a manger!*

Yet,

[n] *Which they had heard and seen* at Bethlehem.] Joseph and Mary would, no doubt, upon such an occasion, give them an account of those particulars, which the sacred historians have recounted above, relating to the conception of this Divine Infant; and this interview must greatly confirm and comfort the minds of all concerned.

[o] *His name was called Jesus.*] Grotius thinks there might be an assembly of most of the remainders of David's family on this occasion; but surely, had there been many of them inhabitants of Bethlehem, their kinswoman would not, in such circumstances, have been reduced to the necessity of lodging in a stable.

[a] *Her*

Yet, O blessed Jesus, how much more venerable was that *stable* and *manger*, when graced with thy sacred presence, than the most magnificent palace, or most shining throne of earthly princes! How ill doth it become thy disciples to *seek for themselves great things* in this life, or to be proud of its pomp and grandeur! Give us, O God, the simplicity of children and make us willing to be *conformed* to the *birth* of thy Son as well as to *his death!* SECT. X. Luke II. 21.

Yet, mean as *his birth* might appear, his Heavenly Father did not leave him without witness. We see him, in this wonderful account that the *Evangelist* hath given us, surrounded with a brighter lustre than a court or a crown could have afforded. *Angelic legions* are employed as heralds to proclaim the new-born King. And to whom are they sent? To humble pious *shepherds*, diligently employed in the duties of their proper calling and *watching by night* for the security of their flocks. Who would not gladly have shared in their poverty and fatigue, to have heard with them these *good tidings of great joy?* 9 11 8 10

Let us observe with what delight these courtiers of heaven undertook the happy embassy to these lowly mortals. Let us with pleasure attend to the *anthem* of these benevolent spirits. Far from envying the favour that was done us, they ascribe *glory to God* for it, and take their part in the joy they give. Let this love of the whole *heavenly host* to us awaken our love to them and our longing for that blessed world where we and they shall surround our dearest Redeemer, not in such a form of abasement as that in which he here appeared, but clothed in that celestial lustre with which God hath rewarded the humiliations of *the manger* and *the cross.* 13, 14

In the mean time let our more intimate concern in this great salvation engage us more cordially to join with these blessed *angels* in their *hallelujahs;* ascribing *glory to God in the highest* for this *peace on earth*, this *good-will towards men*, the great fountain of our present tranquility and future hope! Above all, if Divine Grace hath conquered all the foolish prejudices of our hearts against *Christ*, and taught us with humble faith to apply to him, let us, with the *shepherds*, *bless God for the things* which have been shewn us, and make it our care to *spread abroad* the favour of his name, that others may join with us in paying their homage and their praises to him! 14 20 17

SECT.

SECT. XI.

The purification of Mary and her offering in the temple; where Christ is presented to God, and has a very memorable testimony given him by Simeon and Anna. Luke II. 22—39.

SECT. XI.

Luke II. 22.

LUKE II. 22.

AND, after Mary had been thus delivered of her son at Bethlehem, *when the* forty *days* appointed *for her purification*, [a] *according to* the time limited by *the law of Moses*, (Lev. xii. 2, 4) *were fulfilled*, [b] Jesus was taken by his parents from the place where he was born, and, in obedienc to the divine command, *they brought him to Jerusalem*, there *to present him* as a first-born
23 son *before the Lord* in the temple: *According as it is written in the law of the Lord* (Exod. xiii. 2. Numb. viii. 16, 17.) *that* "*every first-born male shall be called holy to the Lord*," and shall be treated as devoted in a peculiar manner to his service." Agreeably to this precept

AND when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord.

23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.)

[a] *Her purification; καθαρισμω αυτης.*] The Alexandrian, and some other manuscripts, read *αυτων*; and, as it must be owned that both *mother* and *child*, for a while after the birth, were looked upon as ceremonially *unclean*, it might not be improper (with Erasmus and some of the most considerable expositors) to admit this *reading*, and to render it *their purification*, as referring to them both. For, notwithstanding it is true that Christ had no moral impurity, from which he needed to be cleansed, yet we may well enough suppose him, as he *bore our sins*, to have submitted to this ordinance as well as *circumcision*: and as he came into the world, *made of a woman, made under the law*, he would be ready to comply with any institution of the law, that he might thus *fulfil all righteousness*. But as *the law* that is referred to in this place, speaks only of the *woman*, and of the sacrifice that was appointed to be offered for *her purifying*, I have retained the common *reading*, and have made no alteration in the *version*.

[b] *The* forty *days—were fulfilled.*] Mr. Whiston has supposed in his *Harmony*, (prop. xiv. p. 158, *&c. seq.*) that these *forty days* were not accomplished till their return from Egypt: But although this may give the easiest solution to ver. 39, it crowds so many events into that little space and so entirely depends on a precarious *hypothesis*, that *Christ was born about a month before the death of Herod* (which I think Mr. Manne has entirely overthrown, in his *Dissertation on the birth of Christ*, p. 42--45,) that it seems evident upon the whole that *the purification* preceded the *flight into Egypt*, as most *Harmonizers* have thought. But whether *the purification* was *before* or *after* the *visit* of the *wise men* is not so plain: I have placed it *before*, chiefly that I might not interrupt the thread of the story; and partly because the meanness of the *virgin's* sacrifice makes in probable she had not then received the *presents* that were offered by *the wise men*. Nevertheless, I acknowledge it very possible that *the purification* might happen during the interval of Herod's waiting for the return of the *wise men*; and that the holy family might go from Jerusalem to Egypt the very night after Jesus had been presented in the temple; as Garthwait intimates in his excellent *Harmony* (chap. xi. xii.) which is so accurately and judiciously composed, that, as far as I can judge, most of the faults in *Le Clerc*, *Whiston*, *Wells*, &c. may be corrected by it. It was first printed at Cambridge, 1634, and is almost entirely the same with that which was afterwards published under the name of *Mr. Locke's Life of Christ*.—— After all, I shall only observe that this is one of the many instances in which the order of the sacred story cannot be circumstantially determined with demonstrative evidence.

[c] They

SECT. xi.

precept they now went up to redeem him[c], at the price of five shekels, which was the sum appointed to be paid for every eldest son, without any regard to the condition of the family (compare Numb. xviii. 15, 16). *And to offer a* 24 *sacrifice, according to what is enjoined in the law of the Lord*, Lev. xii. 6, 8. where they, whose circumstances were so mean as that they could not conveniently afford a lamb, are ordered to bring *a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons;* which offering suited best the virgin's rank in life, and she did not affect on this occasion to exceed it.

Luke II. 23.

24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.

25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

And behold, there was then *at Jerusalem a* 25 certain *man, whose name was Simeon*[d]*; and he* [*was*] one that was *a* singularly *righteous and religious person*, who was *waiting*, with many others at that time, *for* the coming of the Messiah, *the* great expected *consolation of Israel*[e]*; and the Holy Spirit* of prophecy *was* sometimes in an extraordinary manner *upon him: And* among 26 other things *it was* divinely *revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not die*[f] *before he had seen the Great Anointed of the Lord*, and his eyes had beheld the promised Messiah.

And

c They went up to redeem him.] God having acquired a peculiar right to the *first-born of Israel*, by preserving them amidst the destruction brought on the *first-born* of the Egyptians, though he had accepted of the tribe of Levi as an equivalent, yet would have the memory of it preserved by this little acknowledgment of *five shekels* (or about *twelve shillings* and *sixpence* of our money), which was the price that every *first-born* child must be redeemed at; and in case of an omission here, it might reasonably have been expected that the child should be cut off by some judgment. The *first-born* therefore were *redeemed* by paying of this money, in such a sense as all the people were, when, at the time that they were *numbered*, each of them paid *half a shekel* as *a ransom for their souls, that there might be no plague among them;* as there might otherwise have been if that acknowledgment of the Divine Goodness had been omitted: Exod. xxx. 12---16. But that the *five shekels* demanded for the *first-born* were paid to *redeem* them from being sacrificed on the altar, is one of the most false and malicious insinuations that ever came even from the most inveterate enemy of revelation.

d *Whose name was Simeon.*] Had Simeon been, as some suppose, the president of the council, and father of the celebrated Gamaliel, St. Luke would probably have inserted so honourable a circumstance.

e *The consolation of Israel.*] This is a phrase that frequently is used, both by the ancient and modern Jews, for a description of the Messiah. *The days of consolation* is a common phrase among them, to signify *the days of the Messiah:* nor is there any thing more usual with them than to swear *by their desire of seeing this consolation;* as Dr. Lightfoot proves by several instances, *Hor. Hebr. in loc.* And it is easy to observe that the same way of speaking was made use of by the *prophets*, who often introduce the promise of the Messiah's *coming*, to comfort the people of God in their afflictions. Compare Isa. xlix. 13. lii. 9. lxvi. 13. Jer. xxxi. 13. and Zech. i. 17.

f *That he should not die.*] Our translation, *that he should not see death*, is most literal; but I did not apprehend the antithesis, between *seeing death*, and *seeing Christ*, to be intended as at all material, and therefore did not retain the Hebraism.

SECT. XI.

Luke II. 27. *And he came under the* secret, but powerful *impulse of the Spirit, into the temple,* just at the juncture of time *when* [*his*] *parents brought in the child Jesus* into the court of Israel there, *that they might do for him according to the custom* which the authority *of the* divine *law* had required and established in such cases. *And* when the pious Simeon had discovered him by his prophetic gift and saw that well-known prophecy accomplished, (Hag. ii. 7.) that the Desire of all nations should come into that second temple, *he* was transported at the sight of this desirable Child, and *took him* with a sacred rapture *into his arms, and praised God, and said,* with the highest elevations of devotion and joy,

29 *Now, O,* my Sovereign *Lord* and Master, I thankfully acknowledge that *thou dismissest thy servant* to the repose of the grave *in peace*[g]; and I can die with pleasure, since thou hast dealt with me *according to* the gracious engagements of *thy* 30 *word* to me; *For mine eyes have* at length *beheld* him, whom thou hast appointed as the great instrument of *thy* long expected *salvation;*

31 Even that salvation, *which thou hast prepared* to set *before the face of all people,* as the glorious 32 object of their faith and hope; Ordaining him to be *a light for the illumination of the Gentiles,* to reveal the way of life to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, as well as giving him to be the consolation *and the glory of thy people Israel,* who have the honour of being peculiarly related to him.

33 *And* when they heard this glorious testimony given to the infant Jesus, *Joseph and his mother were astonished at those things which were spoken of him* by so eminent a prophet; which appeared to them so much the more remarkable when compared with the miraculous circumstances which had attended his conception and birth.

34 *And Simeon,* in the warmth of his devotion, *blessed them* both, praying affectionately for them, that the favour of God might continually attend them; *and said to Mary his mother, Behold this* [*Child*] of thine *is appointed for* an occasion of *the fall and rising again of many in Israel,* as he in fact shall be the means of bringing aggravated

27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word:

30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

32 A light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold this *Child* is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against:

[g] *Thou dismissest thy servant in peace.*] There may perhaps be an allusion here to the custom of saying, especially to an inferior, when parting, *Go in peace.* See *note* [l], on Luke vii. 50. sect. lx.

[b] *A mark*

vated ruin upon some by their rejecting him, as well as of procuring salvation and recovery to others on their believing in him; *and* his appearance in the world shall be such as if he was intended and set up *for a mark of contradiction* and reproach[h], to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to many, while he shall be to others for a sanctuary, (Isai. viii. 14.) *Yea,* with such cruel malice and indignity shall he be treated, that the time will come when *a dart shall* (as it were) *pierce through thine own soul*[i], and wound thee in the most sensible manner, when thou art witness to those agonies which shall penetrate his. But these strange revolutions shall be permitted and these mysterious scenes of Providence be opened, *that the* secret thoughts and *reasonings of many hearts may be disclosed;* or that the real characters of men may be discovered and the sincerity of those who are approved may be made manifest; while the hypocrisy and earthly-mindedness of those, who intend only their own secular advantage, under the specious pretence of waiting for the Messiah's kingdom, shall be exposed; who will be soon offended at the obscure form of his appearance and at the persecutions which shall attend him and his cause.

SECT. XI.

Luke II. 34.

35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also;) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

35

And there was also [*one*] *Anna a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel,* a person *of* some considerable note in *the tribe of Asher. She was* now *very far advanced in years, having lived* only *seven years with a husband from* the time of *her virginity: And,* as her husband died while *she was* very young, she had now been *a widow about eighty-four years*[k]; *who,* whatever

36

37

36 And there was one Anna a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity;

37 And she *was* a widow

estate

h *A mark of contradiction* and reproach.] The word σημειον seems here to be used for a *mark* or *butt* to shoot or dart at; which finely intimates the deliberate malice and hellish artifice with which the character and person of Christ was assaulted while he *endured the contradiction of sinners against himself,* Heb. xii. 3.

i *A dart shall pierce through thine own soul.*] Though ῥομφαια seems often to signify *a sword,* as particularly, in Rev. i. 16. ii. 12, 16. vi. 8.) yet we are assured by Grotius it properly signifies *a Thracian javelin.* It may perhaps (as *L'Enfant* observes) be a beautiful allusion to the preceding figure, as if it had been told her, that the darts levelled at her son should be reflected from his breast to hers in such a manner as to wound her very heart. Whether it be rendered *sword* or *dart* it must undoubtedly refer to the part the holy *virgin* took in all the reproaches and persecutions which Jesus met with; but never was it so signally fulfilled as when she stood by the cross, and saw him at once so scornfully insulted and so cruelly murdered. See John xix. 25.

k Had now been *a widow about eighty-four years.*] I know that Grotius and many others interpret this of her whole age; but I think it most natural to suppose that the time of her *marriage* is opposed to that of her *widowhood.*

SECT. XI.

estate she might have in the country, *departed not from* Jerusalem, but kept always so near *the temple* as to be able to resort thither at the hours
Luke II. 37. of morning and evening sacrifice; *serving* [*God*] *with* frequent *fastings and prayers* in which this devout matron spent a considerable part of the

widow of about fourscore and four years; which departed not from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day.

38 *night as well as* of the *day*[l]. *And she coming in at that very time*, which was the hour of prayer, joined with Simeon in what he had done, and publicly *made her acknowledgments to the Lord*[m], that is, to Jesus, who was now present in the temple; *and* afterwards *spake concerning him to all* those of her acquaintance *in Jerusalem that were waiting*, like her, *for* the promised *redemption* of Israel by the Messiah, of whose speedy appearance there was an earnest expectation raised among the pious and devout, as the appointed period of his coming now evidently approached[n].

38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

39 *And* the parents of Jesus, *when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord*, departed from Jerusalem; and full of admiration at the glorious testimonies that were given to their Child, *they* some time afterwards *returned to*

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law

[l] In which she spent a considerable part of the *night as well as* of the *day*.] This is plainly the meaning of *night and day*, nor can the expression possibly signify more. Perhaps she might sometimes attend those anthems which the priests sung in the temple during the *night-watches*, Ps. cxxxiv. 1, 2. to which David may also allude, Psal. cxix. 62.

[m] *Made her acknowledgments to the Lord*, that is, to Jesus: Ανθωμολογειτο τω Κυριω.] The late *English version* renders it, *She expressed her thanks to the Lord, and spake of Jesus*; and it must be acknowledged there are in this very *section* two instances in which the *relative pronoun* refers to a remote, and not immediately preceding, *substantive*; ver. 22 and 27. But it is so evident, that Christ is often called *the Lord* by Luke, as well as by the other sacred writers, that I can see no necessity for giving this passage such a turn, contrary to all the ordinary rules of language.--- And if it be objected that the infant *Jesus* did not seem capable at that time of resenting her gratitude, as a rational agent, I answer that Anna might properly be said to *make her acknowledgments to the Lord*, if she addressed herself to the Child, as Simeon had done, confessing him to be *the Messiah*. The original phrase may have a reference to Simeon's speech, and might be intended to intimate that this of Anna was a kind of *response*, or counterpart to his. But it is also very probable that she, like Simeon, might also address some lofty *hymn of praise* to the *God of Israel* on this great occasion; and if any one think the word *Lord* is here put for *Jehovah*, though the former interpretation seems to me more just and natural, I shall not oppose it as an error of any importance.

[n] The period of his coming now evidently approached.] *The sceptre* now appeared to be *departing from Judah*, though it was not actually gone; Daniel's *weeks* were plainly near their period; and the revival of the *spirit of prophecy*, joined with the memorable occurrences relating to the birth of John the Baptist, and of Jesus, could not but encourage and quicken the expectation of pious persons at this time.

[o] *They*

law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth.

to Galilee[o], *to their own city Nazareth*[p], which was the place of their usual residence, and where (as will be seen hereafter) this Blessed Infant passed the days of his childhood and youth.

SECT. xi.

Luke II. 39.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHO can behold the pious *Simeon* thus *welcoming death*, whilst he *embraced his Saviour*, without wishing to pass over the intermediate moments of life to meet so peaceful a dissolution? May we, like him, approve ourselves the faithful servants of God; and then we may hope that, when our *dismission* comes, we shall share in his serenity and joy! Ver. 28, 29

We may comfortably expect it, if our eyes are now opened to behold with wonder and delight the great *salvation* he has *prepared* for his people; and if our hearts, with our lips, are frequently praising him for this *light* which he hath given *to lighten the Gentiles* as well as to be *the glory of his people Israel.* 30, 31, 32

As such may *Christ* be universally owned and adored, both by *Jews* and *Gentiles!* In the mean time, while he is set up as *a mark of contradiction* and contempt, let us not be *ashamed* of him or of his words; but rather let those indignities which are offered to 34

[o] *They* afterwards *returned to Galilee.*] Luke has omitted the account that Matthew gives us of the *visit* of *the wise men*, and of the holy family's retiring into Egypt; and so has taken no notice of their returning any more to Bethlehem. But there is no sufficient reason to conclude from hence, that these occurrences were antecedent to the *purification of Mary*, and that the holy family immediately returned from Jerusalem to Nazareth. For we have many other instances of a like kind, where events are connected by Luke and the other *Evangelists*, which did not immediately follow each other; of which Luke xxiv. 50, is particularly memorable, as will be shewn in its proper place. I have expressed it therefore with some latitude, as it seems to me probable that upon leaving Jerusalem they returned to Bethlehem, where they were visited by *the wise men*; and which, as they had found it to be the place appointed for the birth of Christ, they might suppose also to be the place designed for his education and abode, and might not chuse to remove from thence till God had ordered them to do it. (See *Lightfoot's Harmony*, Matt. ii. *init.*) However, if they now returned to Nazareth, it is more than possible that Providence might bring them afterwards to Bethlehem, upon some occasion or other, that when the *wise men* came to inquire after Jesus they might find him in the place to which they were directed. See Mr. *Manne's first Dissertation on the Birth of Christ*, p. 41, 42, and compare *note* [n], on Matt. ii. 11. in the next section.

[p] *To their own city Nazareth.*] It hath been suggested to me by a very learned and ingenious writer, since the publication of the preceding *note*, that the parents of Christ carried him back from Jerusalem to Bethlehem after the *purification*, and lived there a year or more before the *Magi* came; Joseph probably thinking it his duty to settle there, from the persuasion he had, that this wonderful Child was the Messiah, and that the Messiah was to be *educated*, as well as *born*, at Bethlehem, David's *city*. From hence he removed to Egypt; and when he was directed to come back, Joseph appears to have designed to return with Jesus to Bethlehem, had not God commanded him to go to Nazareth, a place which he seems to have esteemed too contemptible to be the abode of so illustrious a person. And this gentleman thinks that when Nazareth is here called τὴν πολιν ἑαυτων, *their own city*, it intimates an attempt to settle elsewhere in a city that was *not their own.*

SECT. XI.

to him be as *a sword* to *pierce through* our own souls! Let us remember that the gospel, with all the difficulties which attend it, is the great touch-stone by which God will try the characters of all to whom it comes! May our ready acceptance of it, and our zealous adherence to that sacred cause, approve the humble sincerity with which we inquire into its evidence; that *Christ* may not be to us *a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence*, but rather the means of raising us to God and happiness, even to that *redemption* for which they that wait shall never be ashamed!

Ver. 35 38

Our circumstances in life are various: There are comparatively few who have such leisure for extraordinary devotion as was the privilege of the pious *Anna:* Where it is found, let it be valued and improved: But how great and how many soever our engagements and entanglements in life may be, let the care of our souls be still our chief concern. Let us be *serving God* in one sense or another, *night and day;* with *prayers*, pouring out our souls before him morning and evening; and at proper seasons adding *fasting* to prayer, and public solemnities to private retirements!

36 37

To conclude; let the example of these *aged saints* impress and animate those, whose *hoary heads*, like theirs, are *a crown of glory, being found in the way of righteousness*, (Prov. xvi. 31). Let those venerable lips, so soon to be silent in the grave, be now employed in shewing forth the praises of their Redeemer. *Surely days should speak, and the multitude of years should teach*, such *wisdom*. (Job xxxii. 7.) Such *fruit* may they produce *in old age;* and may they have the pleasure to see all these pious attempts most thankfully received by the *rising generation*, and most gratefully improved by them; that they may quit the world with the greater tranquility, in the view of leaving those behind them to whom *Christ* shall be as *precious* as he hath been to them, and who will be *waiting* for God's *salvation*, while they are gone to *enjoy* it! Amen.

25

SECT. XII.

The sages, or wise men, came from the east, under the guidance of a star, to enquire after Christ; and being directed unto Bethlehem, pay him their homage, and offer him their presents there.

MAT. II. 1.

SECT. XII.

NOW when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the

Mat. II. 1.

Mat. II. 1.

NOW *after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea*, even *in the days of Herod the* Great, who at the time of Christ's nativity was *king* of that country, there happened a memorable occurrence, which gave a great alarm to the Jews, and made

the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

made the æra of Christ's birth very remarkable among them. For *behold*, there were [*certain*] *sages*[1], that is, wise and learned men (who, on account of their applying themselves to the study of natural philosophy, were called Magi) that had observed a bright and unusual luminary in the heavens, which they were taught to understand as an intimation that a very Illustrious Person was then born in Judea, who was destined by God to that universal empire, the fame and expectation of which had spread so far in those parts: they therefore *came from the east*-country[b], where they dwelt, *to Jerusalem*, the capital of the Jewish kingdom; and there they began the inquiry which had occasioned them to undertake so long a journey, *saying* to those who they thought might be most likely to inform them, *Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen* a beautiful light, which we understand to be *his star, in the east*-country[c], of which we are natives; *and* therefore

SECT. xii.

Mat. II. 1.

2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

[1] *Certain sages.*] It would be quite foreign to my purpose to enumerate the various conjectures of learned men relating to these Magi. I find not amongst them all so wild an hypothesis as that of Vander Hard, *(New Memoirs of Lit.* Vol. II. p. 69. *& seq.)* that they were learned Jews, who came from the colonies carried away by Shalmanezer and Nebuchadnezzar, and were *ambassadors* in the name of the whole body to pay their homage to the Messiah, and to congratulate their brethren on his birth. It is most probable they were *Gentile Philosophers*, who, by the Divine Influence on their minds, had been led to improve their knowledge of *nature*, as the means of leading them to that of the one living and true God; and it is not at all unreasonable to suppose that God had favoured them with some extraordinary revelations of himself, as he did Melchizedeck, Abimelech, Job and his friends, and some others who did not belong to the Abrahamic family, to which he never intended absolutely to confine his favours.—As to the title that is here given them, it is certain that the word Μαγοι was not appropriate in ancient times to such as practised wicked arts, but frequently was used to express *philosophers*, or men of learning; and those particularly that were curious in examining the works of nature and in observing the motions of the heavenly bodies, (compare Dan. ii. 2, 27. and v. 11. *Septuag.*) And indeed *Magi* is become a title so familiar to us, and is so far naturalized among us, that I was almost ready to retain it in my *version*, had I not feared it might excite in common readers something of the same idea with magicians, which always suggests a bad sense.

[b] *Came from the east*-country.] I do not venture to determine in the *paraphrase*, from what part of the *east* these philosophers came. Had they been (as Mr. Fleming supposes in his *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 392) a deputation from all the Magi in Persia, Media, Arabia and Chaldea, or had they been *kings*, as the *Papists* fancy, so grand a circumstance as either of these would in all probability have been expressly recorded. I rather think, with Grotius, that they came from Arabia, which is often called the *east*, (see Gen. xxv. 6, 18. Job i. 3. Judg. vi. 3. 1 Kings iv. 30. and Jer. xlix. 28), and was famous for gold, frankincense, and myrrh (compare ver. 11). And if so, their journey lay through a barren and scorching country, and they were obliged to pass through deserts infamous for robbery and murder, which much illustrated their piety and zeal.

[c] *We have seen his star in the east*-country.] There is no need of supposing with some of the *fathers*, that they knew the signification of this *star*, by comparing it with Baalam's prophecy, Numb. xxiv. 17. or Daniel's, Dan. ii. 44. and ix. 25. nor can we think, as Grotius seems to intimate, that they discovered it by the rules of their art.

SECT. xii.

fore we *are come*, in humble submission to the will of Providence, *to prostrate ourselves before him*[d], and to pay our homage to him.

Mat. II. 3. *And king Herod*, who was a prince of a very suspicious temper, and whose cruelties had rendered him exceedingly obnoxious to his subjects, *when he heard* [*of this*] inquiry of theirs, *was* very much *troubled; and all Jerusalem* was also in perplexity *with him*, fearing he should make it an occasion of renewing some of those tyrannical actions which had lately filled them with so much horror[e].

3 When Herod the king had heard *these things* he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4 *And* therefore, to secure his crown, which Herod was afraid might be in danger from this new-born King, *when he had* called a council and had *assembled all the chief* of the *priests*[f], *and* with them *the scribes of the people*, whose peculiar business it was to study and explain the scriptures, *he inquired of them, where it was*, according to the Jewish prophecies, that *the* long-

5 expected *Messiah was to be born*[g]. *And they said unto him*, with one consent, He is certainly to be born *at Bethlehem in Judea; for so it is written*

6 *by the prophet* Micah, chap. v. 2. "*And thou Bethlehem* Ephratah, *in the land of Judah*, inconsider-

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 And thou, Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among

art. It is much more probable that they learned it by a *Divine Revelation*, which it is plain that they were guided by in their return, as we see afterwards at ver. 12.

[d] *To prostrate ourselves before him.*] This I take to be generally the signification of προσκυνεω. It is a ceremony still used to *eastern* princes, and hath been of great antiquity. Compare Gen. xlii. 6. and xliii. 26, 28.

[e] Filled them with so much horror.] Besides that shocking instance of his cruelty which he had formerly given in the slaughter of their Sanhedrim, (*Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xiv. cap. 9. (al. 17. § 4.) & lib. xv. cap. 1. § 2.) his barbarous inhumanity was such, that he had put to death his beloved wife Mariamne by a public execution, (*Antiq. lib.* xv. *cap.* 7. (al. 11.) § 5.) and after this had caused Alexander and Aristobulus, the two sons he had by her, to be strangled in prison, on what appear to be no other than groundless suspicions. (*Antiq.* lib. xvi. cap. 11. (al. 16.) § 6.) These and many other instances of his cruelty are related at large by Josephus: and it was probably about this very time that he executed many of the Pharisees, on occasion of some predictions they had given out, that God was about to take away the kingdom from him; and likewise slew every one in his own family who adhered to those things that were said by the Pharisees. (*Antiq.* lib xvii. cap. 2. (al. 3.) § 4.) From whence it might be seen there was not any thing so barbarous and horrid which such a cruel tyrant was not capable of doing.

[f] *All the chief* of the *priests.*] *All the chief priests* must comprehend here, not only the *high-priest* for the time being, and his *deputy*, with those who formerly had borne that office, but also the *heads* of the *twenty-four courses*, as well as any other persons of peculiar eminence in the priesthood. In this sense *Josephus* uses the word. *Antiq.* lib. xx. cap. 8. (al. 6.) § 8. p. 973. *Edit. Havercamp.*

[g] *Where the Messiah was to be born.*] How strongly all this story implies a general expectation of the Messiah, I need not say. I would only observe that Herod seems to have believed that such a person was foretold; and, on the credit of the *chief priests* and *scribes*, that he was to be born in Bethlehem; and yet was, at the same time, contriving to destroy him; which was the height of impious madness as well as cruelty.

among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.

inconsiderable as thou mayest now appear, yet *art by no means the least* [h] *among the* cities belonging to the *princes* or heads *of* thousands in *Judah*; *for out of thee shall come forth a* Great and Illustrious *Ruler, who shall feed* and govern *my people Israel*, most wisely and tenderly performing the office of their Great Shepherd."

SECT. XII.

Mat. II. 6.

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

7 *Then Herod having secretly called the sages* to an audience, *got exact information from them* [i] *about what time the star*, which they had seen, and which proved the occasion of their journey, first *appeared* to them; that he might thereby make some conjecture concerning the age of the child to whose birth it referred. (Compare ver. 16.)

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go, and search diligently for the young Child, and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

8 *And* after they had satisfied his curiosity and had informed him of the observations they had made about this star, Herod communicated to them the answer he had received from the priests and scribes; and, *sending them to Bethlehem*, as the place where they might expect to see the new-born Prince, *he said, Go, and make a very exact inquiry concerning the Child* you are seeking; *and when you have found him* return hither directly, and *inform me* of it [k], *that I also*, who would permit no interests of mine to interfere with the decrees of heaven, *may come* with my

[h] *Art by no means the least.*] When this, and several other *quotations* from the *Old Testament* which we find in the *New*, come to be compared with the *original*, and even with the *Septuagint*, it will plainly appear that the *apostles* did not always think it necessary exactly to transcribe the passages they cited, but sometimes contented themselves with giving the general sense in some little diversity of language, as Erasmus has well observed in his memorable *note* on this text. If the clause in Micah which we render, *though thou be little*, be translated, *art thou small among the thousands of Judah?* &c. it will solve the great difference which there seems to be between the *prophet* and the *evangelist*; and I think it is the easiest solution of it: for the mark of *interrogation* is not always expressed where the sense shews it must be implied. See the *Hebrew* of Job xli. 1, 2. 1 Kings xxi. 7. and Zech. viii. 6.—I do not urge the learned Dr. Pocock's solution, that the word ZEHHIR signifies both *little* and *great*; which seems by no means so natural and just an account of the matter, though Vatton this place prefers it to all others.

[i] *Got exact information from them.*] That this is the signification of the word ακριβωσ, the learned Dr. Scott's note on this place hath abundantly convinced me; and to that I refer for the reason of giving this *version* of it here and in ver. 16.

[k] *When you have found him*, return---and *inform me.*] It is really an amazing thing that so suspicious and so artful a prince as Herod should put this important affair on so precarious a foot, when it would have been so easy, if he had not gone himself under a pretence of doing honour to these learned strangers, to have sent a guard of soldiers with them, who might, humanly speaking, without any difficulty, have slaughtered the Child and his parents on the spot. Perhaps he might be unwilling to commit such an act of cruelty in the presence of such sages, lest their report of it might have rendered him infamous abroad; or rather, we must refer it to a secret infatuation, with which God can, whenever he pleases, confound the most sagacious of mankind.

SECT. xii.

my family *and* court to *pay my homage to him*, to which I look upon myself as peculiarly obliged.

Mat. II. 9. *And, having heard* this charge from *the king*, *they departed* from Jerusalem without the least suspicion of his treacherous and cruel design: *And behold*, to confirm their faith in him to whom they were going, *the* very same *star*, or meteor[l], *which they had seen in the east* country, appeared to them again, and *moved on before them* in the air *till it came* down still nearer to the earth, *and* at length *stood* directly *over* [*the* 10 *place*] *where the* sacred *Infant was. And when they saw the star*, thus pointing out their way, and at length by its station over it marking the very house in which they were to find him, *they rejoiced with* a transport of *joy* [*which was*] *exceeding great*[m], to see themselves in so remarkable a manner under the Divine direction, and with such certainty conducted to the glorious Person whom they came to seek.

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star which they saw in the east went before them till it came and stood over where the young Child was.

10 When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 *And when they were come into the house*[n] where Mary was lodged, being now something better accommodated than at the time of her delivery, *they found the young child with Mary his mother; and*, how different soever this appearance might be from what they had expected[o], they were not at

11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him, and when they had opened their treasures,

[l] *The star*, or meteor.] I say *meteor*, because no *star* could point out not only a town, but a particular house. It is not at all strange Justin Martyr and other *fathers* should suppose it was a *comet*, considering how little *astronomy* was known in their days; but one would not have imagined Grotius should have gone so far as in the least to intimate such a suspicion.

[m] *They rejoiced with a joy which was exceeding great.*] The original phrase, εχαρησαν χαραν μεγαλην σφοδρα, is emphatical beyond any thing which I can think of in our language. *They joyed a great joy very much*, though very bad English, comes nearest to a *literal version*.

[n] *When they were come into the house.*] Mr. Bedford observes in his *Chronology*, p. 740, 741, that it is not expressly said that *the sages* came to Bethlehem: but from the series of the account that Matthew gives us, it seems so very plain that few have questioned it; and it is the less to be doubted, because if Christ (as that author supposes) had been now at Nazareth, he could hardly have been carried into Egypt without passing through Herod's dominions. But it is more difficult to determine whether, if *the sages* found him at Bethlehem, (as we have reason to conclude they did,) it was within a few weeks of his birth; or (as Mr. Manne supposes, p. 41.) about a year after, when they had spent some considerable time at Nazareth; and afterwards, on some unknown occasion, made a visit to Bethlehem, where they must have contracted some acquaintance. The latter supposition is undoubtedly favoured by Luke ii. 39. and Mat. ii. 16; unless we say that the *star* appeared about the time of Christ's conception. It also suits best with all the arguments brought to prove that Christ was born *A. U. C.* 747, or 749, and that Herod died *A. U. C.* 750, or 751, compared with the tradition of the holy family's spending two years in Egypt. (See *Munster* on Mat. ii. 14.) These reasons have a face of strong probability, but I cannot say they entirely convince me; and therefore in the *paraphrase* I have determined nothing either way. Compare *note* o and p, in the last section, on Luke ii. 39. p. 57.

[o] From what they had expected.] Perhaps they expected this great Prince would have

sures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

at all offended at its meanness; but, *falling down* on their faces before him, *they paid him* their *homage: And*, as it was customary in those countries to offer some present to any illustrious personage they came to visit[p], *they opened their treasures*, which they had brought along with them for this very purpose, *and presented him with* the choicest produce of their country, *fine gold, and frankincense, and myrrh*[p].

SECT. XII.

Mat. II. 11.

12 And, being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

12 *And*, after this, they were preparing to go back to Jerusalem, as Herod had desired them; but God, who knew the barbarous intent of the king, interposed for the preservation of his Son and for their security and comfort. So, *being divinely admonished in a dream that they should not go back to Herod, they returned into their own country another* and more direct *way*[r], not at all solicitous as to the consequence of Herod's resentment.

12

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us observe, with pleasure, this farther honour which God did to his *only begotten Son* in ordering *a new star* to appear as the signal of his birth, and in calling these *illustrious persons* from afar to pay their early adorations to him. No doubt they thought such a discovery, as brought them to the feet of their *infant Saviour*[s], an ample recompence for all the fatigue and expence of such

Ver. 2

have been born in the family of Herod; at least, we may be sure it was some surprise to them to find him accommodated only like *a carpenter's child*: but they wisely considered that such miraculous honours as the *star* gave him were far beyond any external circumstance, and therefore paid him their homage as readily as if they had found him in the richest palace. An amiable example of that humble ingenious temper which fits a man for the reception of the gospel.

p Customary in those countries to offer some present to any illustrious personage they came to visit.] That this was customary appears from many passages of the Old Testament. (Gen. xliii. 11—25. 1 Sam. ix. 7, 8. x. 27. 1 Kings x. 2. Psalm lxxii. 10. and Prov. xviii. 16.) And Maundrel, Chardin, and many other modern writers of the best credit, assure us the custom is yet retained. See also *Ælian. Var. Hist.* lib. i. cap. 31, 32, 33.

q *Gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*] This was a most seasonable providential assistance to furnish Joseph and Mary for so long and expensive a journey as that into Egypt; a country where they were entirely strangers, and yet were to abide there for some considerable time.

r *Another* and more direct *way.*] This seems to be intimated in the word ἀναχωρῆσαι, which might perhaps more literally have been rendered *bent back their course.* Herod in the mean-while waiting for their return they had time to get out of his reach before his passion rose, which might have been fatal to them.

s Such a discovery of their *infant Saviour.*] I take it for granted here that they had some divine intimation or human instruction, (which Joseph or Mary might indeed have given them,) that Christ was to *save his people from their sins*, and was *Emmanuel, God with us.* Surely God would not have guided them in this extraordinary manner merely to pay a transient compliment to Jesus. Their *prostrations* probably expressed religious adoration as well as civil respect: and it is not unlikely that their report might in due time make way for the reception of the gospel in the country

SECT. XII.

such a journey. *They were exceedingly transported when they saw the star.* So let us rejoice in every thing which may be a means
Ver. of leading our souls to *Christ*, and of disposing us to cast our-
10 selves down before him with humility and self-resignation!

Let us look upon this circumstance of the sacred story as a beautiful emblem of that more glorious state of the Christian church when *the Gentiles shall come to its light*, and sages *and kings to the brightness of its rising*; when *the abundance of the sea shall be converted to it, and the wealth of the Gentiles* shall be consecrated to its honour. *The multitude of camels shall cover it, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord.* Isa. lx. 3, 5, 6.

6 How wonderful was the honour conferred upon so obscure a town as *Bethlehem* when it was made thus illustrious among *the thousands of Judah!* Happy they who consecrate not only their
11 *gold* and their other possessions, but also their *souls* and their *bodies* to their *great Ruler*, whose office it is *to feed and govern the Israel of God*: under whose conduct and care they shall receive blessings infinitely more valuable than all the treasures of the *east* or the *west!*

But oh, the fatal power of carnal influence on the heart! This
7 engaged *Herod* to receive the news of a Redeemer's birth *with horror*; and with execrable cruelty and vile hypocrisy, to contrive
8 his murder under the specious form of *doing him homage*. Vain and self-confounding artifice! Let us rejoice in the thought, that *there is no understanding, or wisdom, or counsel against the Lord*: no scheme so artfully disguised that he cannot penetrate it, or so politically formed that he cannot with infinite ease confound it.

To what perplexity and grief might these *sages* have been
12 brought had they been made even the innocent instruments of an assault on this *Holy Child!* But God delivered them from such an alarm, and happily guided their return; so that, through his care and favour, they carried home, in the tidings of the new-born *Messiah*, far richer treasures than they had left behind. Thus shall they, who *in all their ways acknowledge God*, by one method or another find that he will *graciously direct their paths.*

country from whence they came.—And if, as early *antiquity* reports, *(Euseb. Eccles. His.* lib. i. cap. 13,) and both Dr. Cave, *(Lit. Hist.* Vol. i. p. 2.) and the learned Dr. Grabe *(Spicileg. Patr.* Vol. I. p. 1—6.) seem to think some messages of extraordinary respect were afterwards sent from Abgarus, king of Edessa in Arabia, to our Lord Jesus Christ, (which might be fact, though the *letters* now remaining should be supposed *spurious,)* it is very possible the report of these *sages*, preserved by *tradition* (if they were then dead,) might add weight to that of *Christ's miracles*, (about thirty years after,) and dispose that prince to take the greater notice of him.

SECT.

SECT. XIII.

The flight into Egypt; the slaughter of the infants; and the settlement of the holy family at Nazareth after Herod's death. Mat. II. 13—23.

MAT. II. 13.

AND when they were departed, behold the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy him.

MAT. II. 13.

SECT. XIII.

Mat. II. 13.

AND after the return of the wise men, *when they* had paid their homage unto Christ and *were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream*, with a message from heaven, *saying*, *Rise up* without any delay, *and take* with thee *the Infant and his mother, and flee* directly *into* the land of *Egypt*[a], *and continue there till I shall give thee notice* to return; *for Herod*, alarmed by the extraordinary circumstances which have lately happened[b], *is about to* make a strict *search after the young Child to destroy him*, lest he in time should prove a formidable rival to his family.

14 When he arose, he took the young Child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

14 *And* Joseph, *rising* from his bed, immediately obeyed the heavenly vision; for *he took the Infant and his mother by night, and withdrew*, with as hasty a flight as their circumstances would allow, *into* the land of *Egypt*, near the borders of which Bethlehem lay.

15 And was there until the death of Herod; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

15 *And* they *continued there till* after *the death of Herod*, which happened not till several months after[c]; *that what was spoken of the Lord by the prophet* Hosea, on another

a *Flee into* the land *of Egypt.*] This circumstance doth not at all agree with the conjecture of Grotius, that this vision might appear after their return to Nazareth; for then (as Le Clerc justly observes) it is much more probable that they would have been ordered to flee into Syria, which was much nearer to Nazareth than Egypt; to which they could not have passed from thence without going through the very heart of Herod's dominions, unless they had taken a very large circuit with great expence and danger. The great number of Jews which resided in Egypt would make their abode there so much the more comfortable.

b Alarmed by the extraordinary circumstances which have lately happened.] When *the wise men* had come so far to pay their homage to a new-born Prince, the several reports of what had lately happened, would, upon this occasion, be revived, and the behaviour of two such celebrated persons as Simeon and Anna, on the presentation of Christ in the temple, which might at first be only taken notice of by a few pious persons, would probably be now reported to Herod, and must add to the alarm which the inquiry of *the sages* gave him.

c Which happened not till several months after] I pretend not to say exactly how many, but must content myself with referring the reader for the proof of this to Mr. Manne's most elaborate and elegant *Dissertation on the Birth of Christ* (p. 35—39), which advances very considerable arguments to prove that Christ was born in the spring, *A. U. C.* 747. *Jul. Per.* 4707, and that Herod died about the passover, *A. U. C.* 750. *Jul. Per.* 4710, probably towards the end of March; though, on further examination, I rather incline to place the birth of Christ in September or October, *A. U. C.* 749; and to conclude that Herod died in March, *A. U. C.* 751. See *Dr. Lardner's Credib.* Part I. Vol. II. p. 796—804—963, *ad fin.*

d *Out*

SECT. xiii.

other occasion, *might* thus, as it were, *be fulfilled* anew; and that in this appointment of the place where Christ should take up his abode, there might appear to be a manifest allusion to that *saying*, (Hos. xi. 1.) "*Out of Egypt have I called my Son*[d];" Christ being in a much higher and nobler sense the Son of God than Israel, of whom the words were originally spoken.

Mat. II. 15.

the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son.

16 *Then Herod, seeing that he was deluded*[e], and that a great affront (as he imagined) was designed him *by the sages*, as there was now no farther prospect of their returning to him, *was exceedingly enraged; and*, in order to make the destruction of this unknown Infant as sure as possible, he *sent forth* a band of murderers, *and* inhumanly *slew all the male children*[f] *that were in*

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth; and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem,

[d] *Out of Egypt have I called my Son.*] It is well known that, from the time of Julian at least, the enemies of Christianity have been cavilling at the application here made of *a prophecy* to Christ, which in its original sense seems to belong to the people of Israel. Learned men have laboured with great solicitude to prove it literally applicable to Christ.—Mr. Pierce's hypothesis (see in his *Dissertation* on this text, added to his *paraphrase* on *Philippians*, p. 103, 108.) that the prophet is pursuing two subjects together, and alternately treating of each, which must therefore be read interchangeably, one part referring to the people of Israel, and the other to Christ (as if it were designed by God that the prophecy of Christ's being *called out of Egypt* should be obscured by such a method) appears indeed to be very ingenious: But I fear, if such liberties were to be allowed, it would render the Scripture the most uncertain book in the world.—Bishop Chandler (in his *Defence of Christianity*, p. 294.) supposes that *calling out of Egypt* is a *proverbial* expression for being delivered from imminent danger; which might have been said to have its accomplishment in Christ's escape, though he had fled into Syria, Arabia, or any other country: But, with all due deference to so great a name, I must observe, that neither Isa. x. 26. Deut. xxviii. 68. or Zach. x. 11. seem sufficient to prove the use of such a phrase; and I apprehend that, if the use of such a *proverb* were proved, the passage before us would still seem a plainer reference to Hos. xi. 1. than to such a general form of speech; so that the difficulty would still remain.---I once thought the words KI NEHHAR ISRAEL DEAHEBU might be rendered and paraphrased after this manner: "*Though Israel be a child*, that is, wayward and troublesome like a little infant, *yet I have loved him, and*, in token of my tenderness to him, *will call* (Jesus) *my Son out of Egypt*; having there preserved him from the dangers which threatened his infancy, that he may at length accomplish my great intended salvation." I still think that this conjecture deserves some consideration, as much more probable than any other solution of this kind I have ever met with. But, on the whole, especially considering the context, I chuse to take them, as Grotius, Heinsius, and many of the best critics do, for a mere *allusion*; and the rather, as I am fully convinced that the next quotation, in ver. 17. must necessarily be taken in this sense.

[e] *Seeing that he was deluded.*] The word ἐνεπαίχθη, which properly signifies to be *played with*, well expresses the view in which the pride of Herod taught him to regard this action, as if it were intended to expose him to the derision of his subjects, and to treat him as *a child*, rather than a prince of so great experience and renown.

[f] *Sent forth* a band of murderers, *and slew all the male-children.*] A very ingenious and learned friend of mine has attempted to account for *Josephus's silence* as to this remarkable fact, by a conjecture, that instead of *sending forth* (as it was in the first edition) *a detachment of soldiers*, (of which, he justly urges, nothing is expressly said in the text) he might only send *private orders* to have the children taken off as secretly as possible; so that it might not make any public noise and come to the notice of the Jewish historian. But, in answer to this (not to insist upon the argument from Macrobius, *Saturnal. lib.* ii. *cap.* 4. that the Emperor Augustus had heard of it at Rome) I would observe that it

Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

in Bethlehem, and in all the confines of it, from their entrance upon the second year[g], *and under:* as that, *according to the time of which he had got exact information from the sages*, must include all that were born there since the appearance of the star.

SECT. xiii.

Mat. II. 16.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

17 And *then*, as this cruel execution extended itself to the neighbouring places, and in particular to Ramah, a town of Benjamin, which lay near Bethlehem, *that* remarkable saying *was* farther *fulfilled which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet* (Jer. xxxi. 15.); for this was plainly an event to which those words might be applied with more literal propriety than to the captivity of the Jews in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, which they were originally intended to describe[h], when they were first delivered by the prophet,

it is certain nothing of such *privacy* in the dispatch of these children can be inferred from the word ανειλεν, since it is also used to express the crucifixion of *our Lord*, (Acts ii. 23. x. 39.) the stoning of Stephen, (Acts xxii. 20.) and the beheading of James the Apostle, (Acts xii. 2.) all which were *public executions*; as well as the intended assassination of Paul by a band of armed men. (Acts xxxiii. 15.) And if it be considered, on the one hand, how difficult it is *privately* to murder *children under two years old*, as they are hardly ever left alone; and on the other, how ill such a cautious and uncertain procedure would have agreed with the furious disposition of Herod and the haughty rage in which these orders were given, I believe few will incline to this *hypothesis*. As for the *silence* of Josephus, it is to be considered that Bethlehem was but a small place; and therefore, in a reign of so much cruelty, the slaughter of its infants might not be taken very much notice of. Josephus was not old enough to remember it himself; and if he did not find it in the *Memoirs* of Nicholas of Damascus (that flattering historian, of whom we know he made great use in compiling the life of Herod), he might be unwilling to introduce it, even if he were particularly acquainted with it; lest the occasion might have led him to mention what generally at least he is solicitous to decline, I mean *Christian affairs*. On the whole, if we compare *contemporary historians* of every age we shall find some material fact or another omitted by each of them; yet that *silence of one* is never urged as an argument against admitting the express testimony of the rest. See *Dr. Lardner's Credib.* Part I. Vol. II. book ii. chap. 2. § 1. p. 746. *&c. seq.*

[g] *From their entrance upon the second year.*] The reasons which determined me to render απο διετους thus, may be seen in Sir Norton Knatchbull's excellent *note* on this place. It is probable that Herod in his passion ordered the *slaughter of the infants* as soon as he perceived that he was disappointed in his expectation of the return of the *wise men*, lest otherwise the Child he was so jealous of might be removed; and as his cruelty extended even to those who had *entered on the second year*, which is expressly said to be *according to the time of which he had got exact information from the sages*, it must be natural to conclude from hence, that it was not till some considerable time after the *birth of Christ* that he was visited by *the wise men*, even though we should allow the first appearance of *the star* to have been (as some suppose) about the time of *Christ's conception*. Compare *note* n on Matt. ii. 11. For the version of ακριβωσω, see *note* i on ver. 7.

[h] Which they were originally intended to describe.] It is very evident from the following clause, (Jer. xxxi. 17.) *Thy children shall come again to their own border*, that these lamented persons were not *slain*, but carried into captivity; and it is well known that Ramah was the place where they were assembled to be led away to Babylon. (Jer. xl. 1.) So that it is certain this can only be an *allusion*, as it is intimated in the *paraphrase*. And I look upon this as a sure argument, that a passage in scripture, whether prophetical, historical or poetical, may, in the language of the New Testament, be said to be *fulfilled*, when an event happens to which it may with great propriety be accommodated. See Dr. Sykes on the *Truth of Christianity*, chap. xiii. p. 217, *&c. seq.*

[i] *Rachel,*

SECT. xiii.

prophet, *saying*, " *In Ramah there was a* most doleful *voice heard, lamentation and weeping and abundant mourning*, as if *Rachel*, that tender mother, who was buried near this place[i], had risen out of her grave, and was *bewailing her* lost *children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not.*"

Mat. II. 18.

18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

19 *But* after this, *when Herod was dead*[k], and an end put to all his cruelties, *behold, an angel of the Lord* again *appeareth in a dream to Joseph*, while he continued to sojourn *in Egypt*,

19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

20 *Saying*, The way is now prepared for thy return from hence, and I am sent, according to the intimation that was given thee before, to bring thee notice of it: and therefore now *arise and take the Infant and his mother, and go* back *to* thine own abode in *the land of Israel; for* thou mayest safely do it, since *they are dead who sought* to destroy *the young Child's life*[l]

20 Saying, Arise and take the young Child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead which sought the young Child's life.

21 *And* Joseph had no sooner heard the message that was brought him by the angel, but *he* immediately *arose, and*, cheerfully confiding in the Divine protection, *took the young Child and his mother*, according to the command he had received, *and came into the land of Israel.*

21 And he arose, and took the young Child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

22 *But when*, upon his coming to the borders of it, *he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judah in the room of his father Herod*, knowing him to be the heir of his cruelty[m] as well as of his kingdom, *he* was afraid to go thither; notwithstanding, being warned

22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea, in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; notwithstanding, being warned

[i] *Rachel*, who was buried near this place.] See Gen. xxxv. 19. and 1 Sam. x. 2.

[k] *When Herod was dead.*] It is well worth while to read the particular and affecting account which Josephus has given of the *terrible death* of this inhuman tyrant, whom God so remarkably made *a terror to himself*, as well as to all about him. (See *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xvii. cap. 6. (al. 8. § 5. & *Bell. Jud.* lib. i. cap. 33. (al. 21. § 5, 6, 7. Eusebius thought it so great an illustration of the *gospel history*, that he has inserted it at large (*Eccl. Hist.* lib. i. cap. 8.) with a degree of *exactness*, which joins with many other instances of the like nature, to shew us how cheerfully we may depend upon the many invaluable *extracts* from a multitude of *ancient books* now lost, which he has given us both in his Ecclesiastical History and in his other writings, especially in his *Præparatio Evangelica.*

[l] *They are dead who sought* to destroy *the young Child's life.*] It is a very ingenious conjecture of Mr. Manne, that Antipater, the son of Herod, who, at the time when Christ was born, was heir-apparent to his crown, and was a prince so cruel and ambitious, that he had procured the death of his two elder brothers to clear his way to the succession, would very probably be an active counsellor and instrument in seeking the destruction of the new-born Jesus, and in advising to the *slaughter of the infants.* And, as this Antipater *died* but five days before Herod, both might be referred to in these words of the angel, *They are dead*, &c. See *Manne's Dissert.* p. 74, 75. and compare *Joseph. Antiq. Jud.* lib. xvi. cap. 8. (al. 11.) § 4. lib. xvii. cap. 1. & 8. (al. 10.) § 1. *Edit. Havercamp.*

[m] The heir of his cruelty.] Archelaus, in the very beginning of his reign, massacred three thousand Jews at once in the temple, and was afterwards banished, in the tenth year of his government, to Vienne in Gaul, by Augustus, on a complaint brought against him by the chief of the Jews for his various cruelties. See *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xvii. cap. 9. (al. 11.) § 3. p. 851, & cap. 13. (al. 15.) § 2. p. 866.

[n] *Galilee—*

warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:

he was afraid to go thither to settle, or so much as to take it in his way; *but, being* again *divinely admonished in a dream, he withdrew into the region of Galilee*, which was under the government of Herod Antipas[n], a prince of a milder character; and who was then on such hostile terms with Archelaus, that there was no danger of his giving them up to him. SECT. XIII. Mat. II. 22.

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

And he went and dwelt in a little *city*, on the confines of Zabulon and Issachar, which was *called Nazareth*, where he had formerly resided before he went to Bethlehem; and being thus returned to his own city, Jesus was there brought up and educated in a place so very contemptible among the Jews, that it was grown into a proverb with them, That no good thing could be expected from thence (John i. 46. vii. 52.) so that by this a way was further opened by the providence of God, *that it might be fulfilled what had been spoken* in effect *by* many of *the prophets*. "*He shall be called a Nazaræan*[o];" that is, he shall appear in mean and despicable circumstances, and be treated as the mark of public contempt and reproach. 23

IMPROVEMENT.

What is our fallen nature, that it can be capable of such enormities as we have now been surveying! Or what imaginable circumstances of grandeur and power can free the mind of an ambitious creature from servitude and misery! Who can behold Herod Ver. 16

[n] *Galilee*—under the government of Herod Antipas.] Herod the Great divided his dominions by his last will, appointing Archelaus to succeed him as king of Judea, Herod Antipas to be Tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa, and Philip to be Tetarch of Trachonitis and the neighbouring countries. (*Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xvii. cap. 8. (al. 11.) § 1. But Herod Antipas endeavoured to supplant his brother Archelaus, when application was made to the Romans to confirm the will, and went to Rome, with a view of obtaining the kingdom, (which was left to him in a former will,) in which he was supported by the interest of the whole family who hated Archelaus, and thought his brother to be far more worthy of the kingdom; and, though he did not carry his point, the attempt was such as could not but widen the breach there was before between them, and left no room for any future correspondence. See *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xvii. cap. 9. (al. 11.) § 4. & cap. 11. (al. 13.) § 4.

[o] *He shall be called a Nazaræan.*] If the solution given in the *paraphrase* be not allowed, I must acquiesce in Chrysostom's opinion, that the passage referred to is lost: For it is very unnatural to explain this text by Sampson's being appointed a Nazarite, Judges xiii. 5. or the Messiah's being spoken of as Netzer, *the branch*, Isai. xi. 1. or to account for it with Witsius, by God's being called *Notzer, the preserver of men*, Job vii. 20. See *Wits. Meletem. Diss.* § 16.) The joint sense of many scriptures is thus referred to, John vii. 38. and James iv. 5. And that the Messiah should be treated in a very *contemptuous manner*, was foretold by David, Psal. xxii. 6. & *seq.* lxix. 9. by Isaiah cha. lii. and liii. and by Zechariah, chap. xi. 12, 13.

SECT. XIII.

Herod under the agitation of such a barbarous rage, and not see the vanity even of royal dignity, when the man that sways the sceptre over others *hath no rule over his own spirit?* Surely none of the innocent victims of *Herod's* wrath felt so much from the sword of their barbarous murderers as the guilty mind of the tyrant from its own unnatural transports.

Mat. II. 21.

The indignation which arises in our minds on the view of so much wickedness, finds a secret satisfaction in this thought. But how grievous is it to reflect on what the *parents* of these poor babes felt while *the sword* that murdered their children in their very sight *pierced through* their own bowels? *Happy*, in comparison with these, were *the wombs that never bare and the paps that never gave suck!* Let parents remember how soon their dearest hopes may be turned into lamentation and learn to moderate their expectation from their infant offspring and check too fond a delight in them.

18

Let us all learn to be very thankful that we are not under the arbitrary power of a *tyrant*, whose sallies of distracted fury might spread desolation through houses and provinces. Let us not say, Where was the great Regent of the universe when such a horrible butchery was transacted? His all-wise counsels knew how to bring good out of all the evil of it. The agony of a few moments transmitted these oppressed innocents to peace and joy, while the impotent rage of *Herod* only heaped on his own head guilt, infamy and horror. *He conceived mischief, and he brought forth vanity*, (Job xv. 35:) and while he studied to prevent the establishment of the *Messiah's* kingdom, and *set himself* with impious rage *against the Lord, and against his Anointed, He that sitteth in the heavens did laugh*, yea, *the Lord had him in derision.* (Psalm ii. 2, 4.) That God, who discerns every secret purpose of his enemies, and foresees every intended assault, knows how, whenever he pleases, by a thought, by a *dream*, to baffle it.

The preservation of the holy child *Jesus* in *Egypt* may be considered as a figure of God's care over his church in its greatest danger. God doth not often, as he easily could, strike their persecutors with immediate destruction; but he provides a *hiding-place* for his people, and, by methods not less effectual, though less pompous, preserves his chosen seed from being swept away, even when *the enemy comes in like a flood.*

13

Egypt, that was once the seat of persecution and oppression to the *Israel of God*, is now a refuge to *his Son:* and thus all places will be to us what Divine Providence will be pleased to make them. When, like *Joseph* and *Mary*, we are cut off from the worship of his temple and perhaps removed into a strange land, he can be *a little sanctuary* to us and give us, in his gracious presence, a rich equivalent for all that we have lost.

14, 15

They

They continued here till he gave the signal for their departure. SECT. XIII.
Let us, in like manner, remember that it is God's part to direct and ours to obey; nor can we be out of the way of safety and Ver. 19
of comfort while we are following his directions, and steering our course by the intimations of his pleasure!

Jesus survived his persecutors, and returned into the land of 20
Israel again; but such was his condescension, that he abode at *Nazareth*, which seems to have been alloted him as the most humble station. Let us never be unwilling to *bear reproach* for 23
him, who from his infancy endured it for us; nor take offence at the meanness of his condition, whose removes were directed by angelic messengers, as immediate envoys from the God of heaven!

SECT. XIV.

Jesus, at the age of twelve years, comes up to the passover at Jerusalem, and there discourses with the doctors in the temple. Luke II. 40. *to the end.*

LUKE II. 40.

AND the Child grew, and waxed strong in Spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Luke II. 40. SECT. XIV.

AND the child Jesus, being returned to Nazareth, was educated in that city under the care of Joseph and his mother, and there *grew up, and became strong in Spirit*, discovering early marks of a sublime and heavenly genius and visibly appearing to be *filled with* an uncommon portion and degree *of wisdom; and* it was plainly to be seen that *the grace of God was* eminently *upon him*; so that he made an extraordinary progress in knowledge and piety betimes and was thus looked upon as a distinguished favourite of heaven. (Compare Judg. xiii. 24, 25.) Luke II. 40.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

Now his pious *parents went yearly to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover*; as it was usual for those families to do that were remarkably religious, though only the adult males were by the law obliged to appear before the Lord on this occasion. (Compare 1 Sam. i. 3, 7, 21.) 41

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast.

And when he was twelve years old, and so, according to the Jewish maxims, came under the yoke of the law[a], his parents, when *they went up to Jerusalem*, 42

[a] Came under the yoke of the law.] Though I am not satisfied of the truth of Grotius's assertion, that the Jewish children under this age were called KETANIM, or *little ones*, and afterwards NEKHARIM, or *children*, (since it is certain that the word NEKHAR is often used for those under that age; see 1 Sam. i. 24. Judg. xiii. 24. and Hos. xi. 1, 3.) yet I think the fact asserted in the *paraphrase* is generally allowed by learned men. See *Wotton's Miscel.* Vol. I. p. 320. and *Lightf. Hor. Heb. in loc.*

[b] Three

SECT. XIV.

Luke II. 49.

rusalem, according to the usual *custom of the feast,* thought it proper to take him with them. to celebrate that glorious deliverance which God had so many ages ago wrought for his people when he brought them out of Egypt, the memory of which was carefully to be transmitted to every succeeding generation. (Compare Exod. xii. 26, 27.)

43 *And when they had finished* all the religious solemnities to be observed in *the days* of unleavened bread, *and were returning home, the child Jesus*, charmed with the sacred entertainments of the temple, and eagerly desirous of improving in the knowledge of his Father's law, *staid behind* them *in Jerusalem: and neither Jo-*

44 *seph nor his mother were aware* [*of it.*] *But* though they saw he was not with them, yet knowing his sociable temper, *they supposed he was* somewhere *in the company* (as several families travelled together on such occasions): *And* they *went a* whole *day's journey* before they missed him; *and* then, in the evening, *they sought for him amongst their kindred and acquaintance*, who were their companions in the journey, and with

45 whom they concluded he had been. *And, not finding him* with them, *they returned* immediately, and came *back to Jerusalem, seeking him* every where with great concern, and ready to suspect that some hostile assault might have been made upon him.

46 *And, three days after* their setting out[b], *they found him in* an apartment of *the temple*, where the teachers of the law used to lecture upon it to the people; and where young persons in particular were examined and had a liberty to ask what questions they thought proper for their farther information[c]. Here was Jesus *sitting in the midst of the doctors*, whose profession it was to teach on these occasions; for he had placed himself among others at their feet[d], and was, with

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not *of it*.

44 But they supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among *their* kinsfolk and among *their* acquaintance.

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46 And it came to pass that, after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

[b] *Three days after* their setting out.] The first day was spent in their journey homeward, the second in their return to Jerusalem, and the third in searching after Christ there.---The word ἐγένετο, *it came to pass*, is a mere *expletive*; and, not imagining that the rules of the most faithful and exact *translation* would oblige me always to retain it, I have frequently omitted it.

[c] *For their farther information.*] All these things are so well illustrated and confirmed by Dr. Lightfoot, in his *Hor. Heb.* on this place, that I cannot but refer the reader thither. See also *Drusius's* excellent *note* on this place.

[d] *Sitting*——at their feet.] I have often thought it a great injury to the character of our Blessed Redeemer, to represent this story, whether in pictures or words, as if Christ, at this tender age, went up into the seats of the *doctors*, and there *disputed* with

with all possible diligence, *both attending to them, and asking them* such *questions* as he judged proper for the further illustration of what they said.

47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

And all who heard him, considering the tenderness of his age, *were in a* perfect *transport of admiration*[c] *at his understanding*, and at the penetration which he shewed, both in the questions he put to them, *and* also in the *answers* he returned to what they asked him. 47

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

And when he was discovered by his parents, and *they saw him* thus employed, *they* likewise *were struck with wonder: and his mother said unto him*, O my *son, why hast thou dealt thus with us? behold*, this is now the third day that *thy father and I have sought thee*, from place to place, *with* inexpressible *anxiety* and distress. 48

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

And he said unto them, What is the cause that you have sought me with so much concern? and why is it, you were at such a loss where you should find me? *Did ye not know that I ought to be at my Father's*[f]? and that wherever I was, I should be so employed in his service as to be secure of his protection? 49

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

And they did not perfectly *understand the words which he spake unto them* upon this occasion[g], as being expressed in something of a concise and ambiguous manner. 50

And

with them. Not one word is said of his *disputing* by the *Evangelist*, but only of his *asking* some *questions* and *answering* others, which was a very usual thing in these assemblies and indeed the very end of them. All was, no doubt, conducted with the utmost modesty and decorum. And if he were with others *at the feet* of these teachers (where learners generally sat, see Luke x. 39. and Acts xxii. 3.) he might be said to be *in the midst of them*, as they sat on benches of a semicircular form, raised above their auditors and disciples.

[c] *Were in a transport of admiration.*] Every learned reader must know that the word εξισανλο here, and εξεπλαγησαν in the next *verse*, are much more forcible than our *translation* of them, and much more literally rendered here.

[f] *I ought to be at my Father's; εν τοις του πατρος μου δει ειναι με.*] There is a known ambiguity in the *original*. I have chosen with Grotius, Capellus, Fuller, &c. to follow the *Syriac version* of the words, where it is rendered *in my Father's house*, which it is certain they will well bear; and so Josephus puts εν τοις του Διος for in *Jupiter's temple; contra Apion.* lib. i. § 18. p. 449. *Havere.* (Compare John xix. 27. Esther v. 10. vi. 12. vii. 9. Gr.) And indeed, though a general apprehension of his being *well employed* might be a reason (as it is intimated in the *paraphrase*) against their excessive anxiety, yet it could not (as the words in this connection seem to imply) have directed them where to find him. It is to be remembered this was the first visit Christ had ever made to the temple since he was a child in arms; and it is no wonder, therefore, that the delight he found there inclined him to prolong it.

[g] *They did not* perfectly *understand the words that he spake unto them.*] It is strange Grotius should think συνηκαν should here be rendered, *They did not attentively consider what he said*, when the very next *verse* assures us *Mary kept all these sayings in her heart.* The phrase only implies that there was something more in *Christ's words* than at first appeared. He conjectures there might be a reference to his being *the Lord* who was to *come into his temple* (Mal. iii. 1.) which, if there be, it is indeed very obscure. It seems more probable it may be an intimation that he had many other important visits to make

to

SECT. XIV.

Luke II. 51.

And he went down into the country *with them, and came to Nazareth; and* there he did not assume any air of superiority on account of the extraordinary applause he had met with from the people who had heard him in the temple, but still *continued subject* to his parents, and respectful *to them*, as a most dutiful and obedient child. *And his mother kept all these sayings* and occurrences *in her heart* and often reflected very seriously upon them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 *And Jesus advanced* considerably *in wisdom*, as well as in age *and stature*[h], *and* grew proportionably *in favour* both *with God and men*; his behaviour being not only remarkably religious, but so benevolent and obliging, as to gain the friendship and affection of all that were about him.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 41, 42 LET us, who are *heads of families*, take occasion from the story before us to renew our resolutions, that *we and our house will serve the Lord*; and remember that it is a part of our duty, not only to God but to our domestics, to engage them with us in his public worship; the pleasures of which will surely be increased when we see them, and, especially our dear *children*, joining with us in attendance on our great common Father.

Let *children* view the example of the *holy child Jesus* with an humble desire to copy after it. Let them love the house and ordinances of God and thirst for the instructions of his good word.

43, 46 Let them think themselves happy if his *servants in the ministry* will bestow a part of their important time in those exercises which are especially suited for their instruction; and let them not only be careful to return the properest *answers* they can, but at convenient times, with modesty and respect, *ask such questions* as may be likely to improve them in knowledge and grace.

Let those *children*, whose genius is most promising and most

51 admired, learn from the blessed *Jesus* to behave themselves in an humble and submissive manner to all their elders and especially to their *parents*; for though he was *the Lord of all*, yet was he *subject* not only to *Mary* his real *mother*, but to *Joseph*, though only supposed

to his *Father's house*; which evidently appears by the sequel of the history.

h *In wisdom*, as well as in age *and stature.*] It is well known that ηλικια may signify either *age* or *stature*; but I think the latter is meant here, because the former was too apparent to need the mention. It seems a very just and important remark of Erasmus here, that all the endowments of the *Man Christ Jesus* were owing to the Divine beneficence, and that the *Deity* communicated itself in a gradual manner to that *human nature* which it had assumed.

Those

supposed to be his *father*. Such *children* may well hope that the *grace of God* will still be *upon them*; and, *growing in wisdom* as they do *in stature*, they will also advance *in favour with God and men*, and be the darlings of heaven as well as of earth. SECT. XIV. Ver. 40, 52

And, oh, that the greatest and wisest of us, those of the longest standing and of the most eminent stations in the church, might learn of this admirable and Divine Child; that, always remembering our relation to God, and ever intent on learning his will and promoting his glory, we might, with humble acquiescence, accommodate ourselves to all the disposals of his providence! How easily could he, who discovered such early marks of a sublime genius and a lively wit, have relished the most elegant delights of science and have eclipsed all the most celebrated poets, orators and philosophers of that learned and polite age! But he laid all those views aside, that he might pursue the duties of that humble rank of life which his *heavenly Father's* infinite wisdom had assigned him; and joined, as it would seem, to assist in maintaining himself and his parents too by the daily labour of his hands. Let us learn from hence, that it is the truest greatness of soul to know our own place and office, and to deny ourselves those amusements of the mind[i], as well as those gratifications of the senses, which are inconsistent with the proper services of our different relations and callings. 49 47 51

SECT. XV.

The opening of John the Baptist's ministry. Mark I. 1—6. Luke III. 1—6. Mat. III. 1—6.

MARK I. 1.

THE beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

MARK I. 1.

THE beginning of the gospel-history *of Jesus Christ, the* Only-begotten *Son of God*, as it is recorded by the evangelist Mark, thus takes its rise from the first opening of John's ministry. It was this John that came under the character of the great forerunner of the Messiah; *As it is written in the prophets*, and particularly in Malachi (chap. iii. 1.) "*Behold, I* will *send my messenger before thy face*, O my Anointed Son, *who shall prepare thy way before thee*; and, as the SECT. XV. Mark I. 1. 2

[i] Those amusements of the mind.] I hope my younger *brethren* in the *ministry* will pardon me if I bespeak their particular attention to this thought; lest, if the main part of their time be given to the *curiosities* of learning, and only a few fragments of it to their great work, *the care of souls*, they see cause in their last moments to adopt the words of dying Grotius, perhaps with much greater propriety than he could use them: *Proh! vitam perdidi, operose nihil agendo:—Alas! I have thrown away life in doing nothing with a great deal of pains.*

SECT. XV.

the harbinger appointed to proclaim thy coming, shall, with remarkable solemnity, make it the business of his ministry to introduce thy kingdom." So also it was prophesied concerning him by Isaiah (chap. xl. 3.) "There shall be heard *the voice of one crying in the wilderness*[a], and solemnly proclaiming to this purpose in the deserts of Judea, *Prepare ye* with readiness *the way of the Lord*, and *make his paths straight* and smooth by removing every thing which might prove an obstruction to his gracious appearance." These prophecies (as it will presently be seen) received a very signal and remarkable accomplishment in John, who, from his office, was surnamed the Baptist.

Mark I. 2.

3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Luke III. 1.

Now this eminent person made his first public appearance *in the fifteenth year of the reign of* the emperor *Tiberius Cæsar*, (reckoning the beginning of his reign from the time when Augustus made him his colleague in the empire)[b], *when* Archelaus being banished, and his kingdom reduced into a Roman province, *Pontius Pilate was governor*, or procurator, *of Judea; and*, as the dominions of Herod the Great had been divided after his death[c], *Herod* Antipas, one of his sons, *was tetrarch of Galilee*, or governor of that fourth part of his dominions; *and his brother Philip tetrarch of* another fourth part, which was *the region of Iturea and Trachonitis* (the name now given to that tract of land on the other side Jordan which had formerly belonged to

LUKE III. 1. Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

[a] *The voice of one crying in the wilderness.*] Most commentators have imagined these words originally to refer to the proclamation of deliverance from the Babylonish captivity: but there is no imaginable reason for supposing an immediate connection between the conclusion of the *thirty-ninth chapter* of Isaiah and the beginning of the *fortieth*; nor can I observe any thing in the process of this *chapter* which may not literally suit the evangelical sense here given it by Mark as well as Matthew and Luke.

[b] Reckoning from the time when Augustus made him his colleague in the empire.] Supposing Christ was born *A. U. C.* 747. (as in *note* c) it is absolutely necessary to interpret the words thus; because the *fifteenth year* of Tiberius, if reckoned from the death of Augustus, began in August, *A. U.* 781. and would thus be the *thirty-fourth year* of *Christ's life*, which is plainly inconsistent with Luke iii. 23. (See *Manne's Dissert.* p. 136—140.) But if the birth of Christ be placed (as seems most probable) in September, *A. U.* 749. and Tiberius was admitted to a part in the empire (three years before Augustus died) in August, 764. the *fifteenth year* of Tiberius on this computation began in August 778. And if John entered on his ministry in the spring following, *A. U.* 779. in the same year of Tiberius; and, after he had preached about twelve months, baptized Jesus in the spring 780. then Jesus at his baptism would be but *thirty years of age*, and some odd months, which perfectly agrees with what St. Luke says of his being at that time *about thirty years old*. See *Dr. Lardner's Credib.* Part I. Vol. II. p. 838, 839.

[c] Divided after his death.] See *note* [n], on Mat. ii. 22.

[d] *Lysanias*

to the tribe of Manasseh): *and Lysanias* was *tetrarch of Abilene*[d], a fair city of Syria, whose territories reached even to Lebanon and Damascus, and were peopled with great numbers of Jews. *In those days*[e], *while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests*[f], *the word of God*, by prophetic inspiration, *came unto John the Baptist*[g], *the son of Zacharias* and Elizabeth, who had lived for several years retired *in the wilderness of Judea.* Compare Luke i. 80. p. 31.

SECT. XV.

Luke III. 2.

2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God [in those days] came unto John [the Baptist] the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness [of Judea.] [MAT. III. 1.]

And John, at the first opening of his ministry, 3 *did* preach with great power, and *baptize in the wilderness; and* perceiving the people inclined to pay an attentive regard to his doctrine, he did not confine himself to that wilderness alone, but *came into all the country about Jordan*, and went a progress over it, from one place to another, on both sides the river, *preaching* every where, as he went along, *the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*, earnestly exhorting men to repent of all the irregularities of their lives, and to be baptized in token of their sincere desire to be washed and cleansed from them; and assuring them at the same time that, if they attended on this institution in a truly penitent manner, they might consider it as a pledge and token of their being forgiven by God.

3 And [MARK. John did baptize in the wilderness, and] came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; [MAT. III. 1. MARK I. 4.]

And

[d] *Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene.*] Some have thought this Lysanias another son of Herod the Great; but it seems much more probable that he was descended from a prince of that name, who had been governor of that country several years before. See *Joseph. Antiq. Jud.* lib. xiv. cap. 13. (al. 23.) § 3. p. 722. Havercamp.

[e] *In those days.*] This is supplied from Mat. iii. 1. where it is proper to observe that the phrase εν ταις ημεραις εκειναις is used in a very extensive sense for *that age* of which he had spoken in the preceding words, though these events happened near *thirty years* after those recorded in the former *chapter* of that gospel. And the phrase is here used with the greater propriety, as John did indeed appear under his public character while Christ continued to dwell at Nazareth; which was the event that Matthew had last mentioned.

[f] *While Annas and Caiaphas were high priests.*] As it was not Caiaphas but Ishmael that immediately succeeded Annas or Ananus (*Joseph. Antiq. Jud.* lib. xviii. cap. 2. (al. 3.) § 2. p. 873.) I cannot suppose, as some have done, that Annas was *high priest* the former part of this year, and Caiaphas the latter; much less that Luke knew so little of the Jewish constitution as to suppose there could be *two high priests* properly so called. The easiest solution is, that one was the *high priest*, and the other his *sagan* or *deputy*; so that the title might, with a very pardonable liberty, be applied to both. See *note* [a] on John xviii. 13. Vol. II. sect. 184.

[g] *The word of God came unto John the Baptist.*] I think these words declare, as expressly as any words can, that John was called to his prophetic work in the *fifteenth year of Tiberius*; so that, if Mr. Manne's arguments prove (as he supposes they do) that Christ was crucified in that *fifteenth year*, then it will follow, that all the events, both of John's ministry and of *our Lord's* must be reduced within the compass of *one year*; which is, for reasons elsewhere given, utterly incredible. To conclude, that by the language which Luke here uses, he intends to express the time of *Christ's death*, though it did not happen in the same year, is doing the greatest violence imaginable to the whole passage. How much easier would it be to admit of a little more latitude in the in-

 terpre-

SECT. XV.

Mat. III. 2.

And while he was thus urging his exhortation, *and saying*, *Repent ye*, he pleaded with them a very new and important argument: *For* (said he, *the* long-expected *kingdom of heaven is* now *approaching*[h]; and God is about to appear, in an extraordinary manner, to erect that kingdom spoken of by Daniel (chap. ii. 44. and vii. 13, 14.) as the kingdom of the God of heaven, which he would set up and give to the Son of man; making it finally victorious over all other kingdoms. It is therefore (said the Baptist) of the highest importance that you should be the subjects of this kingdom; which, without a sincere and universal repentance, you cannot possibly be.

MAT. III. 2. And saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Luke III. 4.

And upon this occasion he failed not to repeat and to insist upon that passage of scripture, (which has in part been just now mentioned,) making it evident that this was all exactly *as it is written in the book of discourses* and prophecies *of the prophet Isaiah; for this* indeed *is he who was spoken of* so expressly by that sacred writer (chap. xl. 3, 4, 5.) when he is *saying*, with a manifest reference to the Messiah's kingdom, "There shall be heard *the voice of one crying* aloud *in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord* with the most thankful readiness, and chearfully set yourselves to *make his paths straight* and plain, by removing every thing which might prove an obstruction when he 5 comes on so gracious a design. *Every valley shall* therefore *be filled* up, *and every mountain*

LUKE III. 4. As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet [for this is he that was spoken of] saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. [MAT. III. 3.]

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the

terpretation of Dan. ix. 26, an aversion to which seems to have plunged that accurate and ingenious writer into a train of inextricable difficulties through all the latter part of his *second essay*.

h *The kingdom of heaven is approaching.*] Dr. Sykes, in his *Essay on the Truth of the Christian Religion*, chap. iii. has largely proved that this phrase refers to those texts in Daniel quoted in the *paraphrase*. It properly signifies the *gospel dispensation*, in which subjects were to be gathered to God by his Son, and *a society* to be formed, which was to subsist first in more imperfect circumstances on earth, but afterwards was to appear complete in the world of glory. In some places of scripture the phrase more particularly signifies the former, and denotes *the state of it on earth* (see Mat. xiii. throughout, especially ver. 41, 47, and Mat. xx. 1.) and sometimes it signifies only *the state of glory* (1 Cor. vi. 9. and xv. 50.) but it generally includes both. It is plain that the Jews understood it of *a temporal monarchy* which God would erect; the seat of which they supposed would be Jerusalem, which would become, instead of Rome, the capital of the world; and the expected Sovereign of this kingdom they learned from Daniel to call *the Son of man;* by which title they understood a very excellent person, who was the promised Messiah, the Christ, or the *Anointed One* of God. Both John the Baptist then and Christ took up this phrase, and used it as they found it, and gradually taught the Jews to affix right ideas to it, though it was a lesson they were remarkably unwilling to learn. This very demand of *repentance* shewed it was a *spiritual kingdom;* and that no wicked man, how polite or brave, how learned or renowned soever, could possibly be a genuine member of it. See my *Sermons on Regeneration*, Numb. IV. p. 106—117.

the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

tain and hill shall be brought down before him[i]; *even the crooked roads shall be made* into a *straight* way, *and the rough places shall be laid* smooth and *level:* for by the mighty power of his grace, which shall be now remarkably displayed, such a victorious way shall be made for his gospel, and it shall be propagated with such speed and success, that it shall seem as if the whole face of nature were miraculously changed; and mountains and valleys and forests and rocks were to spread themselves into a spacious plain before the messenger of it. *And* thus, not the land of Israel alone, but *all flesh*, or the whole human race, not excepting the remotest Gentile nations, *shall see* and admire *the* great *salvation of God.*"

SECT. XV.

Luke III. 6.

6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

6

MAT. III. 4. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. [MARK. I. 6.]

Now, that this extraordinary message might meet with the greater regard, God was pleased to send it by a person on many accounts remarkable, and especially for the temperance and even the severity of his manner of living. For *this John wore* (as the ancient prophets used to do) *a* rough *garment* which was made *of camel's hair*, and so indeed was but a kind of sackcloth; *and* he had *a leathern girdle about his waist* (compare 2 Kings i. 8. Zech. xiii. 4. Rev. vi. 12. and xi. 3.) *And* as for *his food*, it *was* such as the wilderness afforded, which was frequently nothing but a large kind of *locusts*[k], which the law allowed

Mat. III. 4.

[i] *Every mountain and hill shall be brought down* before him.] Grotius has most elegantly illustrated the reference that appears so plainly in this passage to the custom of sending pioneers to level the way before princes when they are coming with numerous attendants: but, by the import of the language that the prophet uses, it is plainly to be seen that the main work is *God's*, though *men* are called to concur with him in it; which is every where the scheme of *scripture*, as it certainly is of sound *reason*. Compare Phil. ii. 12, 13.

[k] A large kind of *locusts*.] Though it may be allowed, on the authority of the accurate *Sandys* (see his valuable *Travels*, p. 183) and many others, that there is in these parts a shrub called the *Locust-Tree*, the buds of which something resemble *asparagus*; yet, notwithstanding all the pains Sir Norton Knatchbull has taken to prove it, I cannot imagine the word ακρίδες is here to be understood as referring to the product of it. It is certain the word in the *Septuagint* and elsewhere generally signifies the animal which we call a *locust*, or a large winged *grashopper* (see Rev. ix. 3, 7, 9.) which the law allowed the Jews to eat (Lev. xi. 21, 22.) and which Pliny assures us made a considerable part of the food of the Parthians and Ethiopians. (See *Plin. Nat. Hist.* lib. xi. cap. 29. and lib. vi. cap. 30.) The matter is excellently illustrated by the learned notes of Heinsius, Drusius and Elsner, on this place; but Erasmus is tediously prolix upon it, and, which is strange, he is very warm too. What need have we to keep a guard upon our spirits when so great and so good natured a man could be angry in a debate of so small importance!—I shall add only on this point, with respect to the use of *locusts* for food, what Dr. Shaw tells us, that, when sprinkled with salt and fried, they taste much like the river cray fish; who justly contends for this signification of the word ακρίδες in his excellent *Travels*, p. 258; where he also observes that, as the months of April and May are the time when these *insects* abound, it may probably

SECT. XV.

allowed him to eat (Lev. xi. 21, 22,) *and wild honey*, often to be found in hollow trees or in the clefts of the rocks. (Compare 1 Sam. xiv. 26. Judg. xiv. 8. and Psal. lxxxi. 16.)

Mat. III. 4.

5 These uncommon circumstances of his public appearance concurred with the time of it to awaken in the people a great regard for his preaching: for their uneasiness under the Roman yoke, which *then* bore hard upon them, raised the most impatient desire of the Messiah's arrival; by whom they expected not only deliverance, but conquest and universal monarchy. They therefore attentively listened to this proclamation of his approach; so that *the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and* multitudes out of *all the land of Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, went out* to hear him, and were attentive 6 *to him*[1]. And great numbers of them were brought under very serious impressions by his faithful remonstrances, expostulations and warnings: *and* those that were awakened to repentance *were all baptized by him in the river Jordan;* expressing the convictions they were under by *confessing their sins*, and, by submitting to this rite, engaging themselves for the future to reformation and obedience.

5 Then went out to him [they of] Jerusalem, and all [the land of] Judea, and all the region round about Jordan [MARK I. 5.]

6 And were [all] baptized of him in [the river of] Jordan, confessing their sins. MARK I. 5.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Mark i. 1.

With what pleasure should we hear *the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God!* and with what reverence remember the dignity of his Divine nature amidst all the condescensions of his incarnate state!

Mat. iii. 2

It is surely matter of unspeakable thankfulness that the *kingdom of heaven* should be erected among men! that the great God should condescend so far as to take to himself a people from our mean and sinful world, and appoint his own *Son* to be the governor of that *kingdom!* How happy are we that it is preached among us and we are called into it! Let it be our great care that we be not only nominal but real members of it.

For this purpose let us remember and consider that, to become the subjects of this kingdom, we are to enter into it by the way

probably be conjectured that John began his ministry about that season of the year; which might also seem more convenient for receiving, and especially, for *baptizing* so great a number of people, than winter could have been.

[1] *Went out to him.*] The novelty of a *prophet's* appearance in Israel, the *family of John*, the circumstances of his *birth*, and the extraordinary character he had, no doubt, maintained for strict and undissembled *piety*, all concurred with the causes mentioned in the *paraphrase* to draw such vast multitudes after him.

way of *repentance;* humbly *confessing our sins,* and resolutely forsaking them, if we do indeed desire to find mercy. SECT. XV.

Let us bless God, both for the promises of *pardon* and for the appointment of the *seals* of it, particularly of *baptismal washing;* always remembering the obligation it brings upon us to *cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* (2 Cor. vii. 1.) Luke III. 3.

And, being ourselves become members of *Christ's kingdom,* let us pray that it may be every where extended. May Divine Grace remove every obstruction, and make *a free course* for his gospel, that it may every where *run and be glorified,* so that *all flesh may see the salvation of God!* Ver. 4, 6

John, with this awful severity of manners and of doctrine, was sent *before Christ to prepare his way.* Let us learn to reflect how necessary it is that the *law* should thus introduce the *gospel;* and let all the terrors of *Moses* and *Elias* render the mild and blessed *Redeemer* so much the more welcome to our souls!

SECT XVI.

John the Baptist addresses suitable admonitions to those that attended his ministry, and proclaims the approach of the Messiah. Mat. III. 7—12. Mark I. 7, 8. Luke III. 7—18.

MAT. III. 7.

BUT when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? [LUKE III. 7.]

MAT. III. 7.

SECT. XVI.

WHEN John opened his ministry there were two different sects among the Jews; that of the Pharisees, who were exceeding strict in ceremonial institutions and in the observation of human traditions; and that of the Sadducees, who, among other very obnoxious notions, denied the existence of spirits and a future state of rewards and punishments: yet some of both these sects, out of curiosity or popular custom, or for some other unknown reason, attended on the preaching of this holy man: *And when he saw* among the multitudes that came to be baptized by him, that *many* both *of the Pharisees and Sadducees*[a] were *coming to* receive *his baptism*[b], as he well knew the open profaneness of the one and the secret wickedness of the other, *he* Mat. III. 7.

[a] *Pharisees and Sadducees.*] The most authentic account of these *sects* may be seen in *Joseph. Antiq. Jud.* lib. xviii. cap. 1. (al. 2) & *Bell. Jud.* lib. ii. cap. 8. (al. 7) *Havercamp.* All writers of *Jewish Antiquities* describe them largely; but, I think on the whole, none better than Dr. Prideaux, *Connect.* Vol. II. p. 335—343.

[b] *Coming to* receive *his baptism.*] I express it in this manner, for though some understand the words επι το βαπτισμα αυτου, of their coming *to oppose his baptism,* I think the reasons for that interpretation not worth mentioning here, and refer my reader to Raphelius, who has given them a larger examination than they deserve. *Annot. ex Xen.* p. 7—11.

[c] *O ye*

SECT. XVI.

Mat. III. 7.

he did not flatter them at all in his address, but *said unto them*, as with some surprize, *O ye* abominable *broods of vipers*[c], crafty, malignant, mischievous creatures, *who hath* taught you to put on this form of humility and repentance and *admonished you to flee from the wrath* which is surely and speedily *to come?* What is it that hath moved you to it, when you Pharisees think yourselves so secure from it on account of the pretended sanctity of your lives, and you Sadducees imagine it to be no other than a mere fable
8 and a dream? Let me exhort you *therefore*, if you design to be baptized by me, to make it your serious and resolute care to *bring forth fruits worthy of repentance*, and to act like those that are penitents indeed, forsaking as well as confes-
9 sing your sins: *And*, if you neglect this, *do not* presumptuously *think* it will be to any purpose for you *to say within yourselves, We have Abraham, for our father*;[d] relying on your descent from that holy patriarch, and your being that seed of his with whom a peculiar covenant was made; *for I* solemnly *say*, and declare it *unto you*, as a certain and important truth, *That God is able, of these* very *stones* that are before your eyes[e], which he can animate and sanctify whenever he sees fit, *to raise up* those who, though not descended from human parents, shall be in a much nobler sense than you *children to Abraham*, as being made the heirs of his faith and obedience; and he would sooner work such a miracle as this than he would suffer his promise to fail, or admit you to the blessings of his approaching

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for [*or* worthy of [repentance: [LUKE III. 8.]

9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father; for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. [LUKE III. 8.]

c *O ye broods of vipers.*] Some think this is to be understood as if it had been said, *Ye wicked children of wicked parents*, but such a reflection on their parents is not necessarily implied. The *children* of pious Eli are called *sons of Belial*, merely with reference to their own licentious characters *as they knew not the Lord.* See 1 Sam. ii. 12.—The word γεννηματα may be used in the *plural number* in reference to the different sentiments, and, if I may be allowed the expression (familiar enough to the Jewish doctors,) *the different families* of these *sects* in question.

d *We have Abraham for our father.*] Dr. Whitby well shews how great the presumption of the Jews on this relation to Abraham was. Munster, on this text, quotes a remarkable passage from the Talmud, in which it is said, "That Abraham sits next the gates of hell, and doth not permit any wicked Israelite to go down into it." These Jews might perhaps pervert the promise in Jer. xxxi. 35, 36, to support this vain and dangerous confidence, in opposition to such a multitude of most express and awful threatenings; particularly Deut. xxxii. 19. *& seq.*

e *Of these* very *stones* that are before your eyes.] The many learned commentators who refer this to God's calling the Gentiles, supposing some of them to be present here, seem to lose all the beauty of the expression; which I have paraphrased at large, because I think few, if any, have set it in so strong a light as it will well bear. It is but a precarious conjecture that the *stones* here referred to were those set up in *Gilgal.* Josh. iv. 3, 20.

f *Is*

proaching kingdom, merely because you have the abused honour to descend from that peculiar favourite of heaven. SECT. XVI.

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. [LUKE III.—9.

These are truths of constant concern, and now particularly seasonable; for the patience of God will not much longer endure so provoking a people. You think of national deliverance, but beware of national judgments; for I assure you that the hand of God is lifted up, *and the axe* of Divine Justice *is even now*, as it were, *applied to the* very *root of the trees*; and *therefore every tree that doth not produce good fruit*, (even every one that, while he professeth himself to be one of God's people, contradicts that profession by a life of wickedness, or by the neglect of vital and practical religion) *is* very certainly and quickly to be *cut down*[f] by death, *and thrown into the fire* of hell. Mat. III. 10.

LUKE III. 10. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

Upon this, many of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who expected to have been treated with greater respect, were so provoked that they turned their backs upon the prophet, and refused to be baptized. (Compare Luke vii. 29, 30. and Mat. xxi. 25.) But it was otherwise with the common people, who were alarmed by what he said, *and the multitudes*, who were more teachable, *asked him, saying, What then shall we do*, that we may be prepared for the kingdom of the Messiah, and may escape this dreadful condemnation and approaching wrath? Luke III. 10.

11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

And he answereth and saith unto them, Be careful not only to observe the ceremonies of religion, but to attend to the great duties of justice and of charity too, which are incumbent upon you as well as on the great and rich; and *he*, for instance, *that hath two coats, let him impart* one of them *to him that hath none; and he that hath* plenty of *food, let him do the like.* 11

12 Then came also Publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

Then there *came also* some of the *Publicans to be baptized:* now these Publicans were a set of men whose office it was to collect the taxes which the Romans had imposed on the Jews, and to pay them to others who were called the chief 12

[f] *Is* very certainly and quickly to be *cut down.*] It is expressed, in the *original*, in the *present tense*; and it may be of some importance to observe here that, in scripture language that which is very sure and very near is spoken of as if it was *already done.* Thus Christ speaks of himself as if he was already in possession of his glory while he was here on earth, John xvii. 24. and sinners too are represented as *condemned already*, John iii. 18. and saints are spoken of as *already glorified*, Eph. ii. 6. and Heb. xii. 22, 23.

SECT. XVI.

Luke III. 12.

chief of the Publicans; and these people, being generally persons of an infamous character, for their injustice and oppression, applied themselves to John under a strong conviction of their guilt,

13 *and said unto him, Master what shall we do* to testify the sincerity of our repentance? *And he said unto them,* Though you are not absolutely required to quit your employment, take care that you *exact nothing more than is enjoined you* by your principals, whose servants you are in collecting the public money.

13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14 *And the soldiers also* applied themselves to him [g] on the same occasion, and in like manner *asked him saying, And* as for us, *what shall we do? And he said unto them, Terrify no man* [h] by a violent overbearing conduct, *nor wrong [any] by false accusation,* in order to get a liberty of living upon him at free quarters; *and be contented with your* legal wages, or *pay* [i], not raising mutinies and seditions to get it increased.

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse *any* falsely, and be content with your wages.

15 *And, as the people were in* great *suspence, and all were reasoning in their hearts* with much solicitude *concerning John,* debating the matter with themselves, *whether he were the Messiah or*

16 *not, John answered all* that put the question to him, in the most direct and positive manner, *saying, I indeed baptize you with water,* to engage you *to* the exercise of *repentance,* which, by submitting to that rite, you solemnly profess; *but there is one coming after me,* even the Messiah himself, *who is* much *more powerful* and considerable *than I* can pretend to be (see John x. 41.) *whose* very *shoes I am not worthy* so much as *to carry* after him, [*or*] *to stoop down and untie the latchet of* [*them*], but should esteem it as an honour to perform the humblest office of menial

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not;

16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water [unto repentance]; but one mightier than I cometh [after me, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear], the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to [MAR. stoop down and] unloose: he

[g] *The soldiers* applied themselves to him.] There is no reason to believe that these were *Gentile soldiers.* Grotius has excellently proved that the Jews in general did not scruple a military life; and a multitude of passages from Josephus might be added to the same purpose: and though most of the *soldiers* in Judea, which was now a province, might be Romans, yet those belonging to Galilee might probably be Jews. Had these been Gentiles, John would surely have begun his instructions to them with urging the worship of the true God.

[h] *Terrify no man.*] The word διασεισητε properly signifies "to take a man by the "collar and shake him;" and seems to have been used *proverbially* for that *violent manner* in which persons of this station of life are often ready to *bully* those about them whom they imagine their inferiors in strength and spirit; though nothing is an argument of a meaner spirit, or more unworthy that true courage which constitutes so essential a part of a good military character.

[i] *With your* legal wages or *pay*] The word οψωνιοις is well known to signify *provision* or *food*; but, when applied to soldiers, it is generally used to signify *the pay* that was allotted for their subsistence. (Compare Rom. vi 23. where it is rendered *wages*; and 1 Cor. ix. 7. where we translate it *charges.*)

The

He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: [MAT. III. 11. MARK I. 7, 8.]

menial service for him. And, if you are indeed his people, *he shall baptize you with* a most plentiful effusion of *the Holy Spirit and with fire;* causing his Spirit to descend upon his followers in the appearance of a flame of fire, to represent its operating on the heart like fire, to kindle pious and devout affections and to purify and enliven the souls of believers. (Compare Acts i. 5. and ii. 3.)

SECT. XVI.

Luke III. 16.

17 Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. [MAT. III. 12.]

But you are to remember this is an awful, as well as an amiable Person, *whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly* winnow and *cleanse* his church, which is (as it were) *his threshing floor*, and at present is covered with a mixture of wheat and chaff: for such will be the nature of the doctrine he shall teach as will effectually discover what is the real disposition of the hearts of men and perfectly distinguish between the hypocritical and the sincere. *And* happy will it be for those that stand the trial; for he *will* carefully *gather* them, as *the wheat into his granary*, and lay them up in heaven as his peculiar treasure: *but* as for *the chaff* which is found among them, as for those empty vain professors that are now mingled with his people, *he will* then treat them as men do the sweepings and the refuse of the floor, and *burn* them up as worthless and unprofitable trash; and I faithfully warn you that it will be *with unquenchable fire*[k]: let this excite you therefore to escape so terrible a doom. (Compare Isa. xli. 16. Jer. xv. 7. and Ezek. xxii. 15.) 17

Such

[k] *The chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.*] There is in what the Baptist here declares, and evident allusion to the custom of *burning the chaff* after winnowing, that it might not be blown back again, and so be mingled with the *wheat:* and, though it may in part refer to the calamities to come upon the Jewish nation for rejecting Christ (as Bishop Chandler has observed in his *Defence of Christianity*, p. 85), yet it seems chiefly to intend the final destruction of all sinners in hell, which alone is properly opposed to *the gathering the wheat into the garner*, (compare Mat. xiii. 40, 41, 42): and howsoever it be certain that the word ἄχυρον in Greek authors does generally signify *all that is left of the corn* when the grain is separated, including *the straw* (see *Raphel. Annot. ex Xen. in loc.* and Gen. xxiv. 25—32, *Septuag.*) yet I apprehend that in this place it must be equivalent to χνοῦς, and signify *chaff* as distinguished from *straw;* since one can hardly imagine either that any thing so useful as *straw* would be made the symbol of these worthless *reprobates*, or that it would be represented as *burnt up*.—As to the phrase of burning the chaff *with unquenchable fire*, Mr. Horberry has observed, with his usual accuracy of judgment, (*Inquiry into the Duration of Future Punishment*, Chap. i. No. 1, 2) that it is absolutely inconsistent with all views of the *restoration of the wicked;* and that, however the phrase of being *consumed like chaff* might seem to favour the doctrine of their *annihilation* (which nevertheless it is certain no punishment of mind or body can of itself effect), the epithet of *unquenchable* given to this *fire* is so far from proving it, that it cannot, by any easy and just interpretation, be reconciled with it.

SECT. xvi.

Such was in general the tendency and purport of John's preaching: *And, offering many other exhortations* to them to the same effect, *he published to the people these glad tidings*[1] of the Messiah's approach and endeavoured to prepare them to receive him in a proper manner; as will be more particularly shewn hereafter. (See John i. 15, *& seq.* and iii. 28, *& seq.)*

Luke III. 18.

18 And many other things in *his* exhortation preached he unto the people.

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. iii. 7.

WHAT an excellent pattern of ministerial service does *John* exhibit in the passage before us! Blessed is that *gospel preacher* who, like him, seeks not his own ease and pleasure and indulges not too luxurious and sensual inclinations, but chearfully accommodates himself to the state and circumstances which Providence hath assigned him, as infinitely more intent on the success of his ministry than on any little interest of his own that can interfere with it!—Happy the man who, imitating the impartiality of this faithful servant of God, *giveth* to every one *his portion of meat in due season* and abhors the thoughts of flattering men in their vices, or buoying them up with delusive hopes in their birth and profession, while they are destitute of real and vital religion!

Luke iii. 10—14.

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May this plain and awakening address be felt by every soul that hears it! And, in particular, let the *children* of religious parents, let those that enjoy the most eminent privileges and that make even the strictest profession, weigh themselves in this *balance of the sanctuary*, lest they be *found wanting* in the awful decisive day. And if the warnings of the gospel have alarmed our hearts, and put us upon *fleeing from the wrath to come*, oh, let *the terrors of the Lord* engage us not only to *confess* but to *forsake* our sins, and to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance!*

Ver. 8.

Let all, to whom the gospel message comes, most attentively and seriously consider in what alarming circumstances of danger and extremity impenitent sinners are here represented. The *gospel* is the last dispensation we must ever expect; *the axe* is *at the root of the* unfruitful *tree*, and it must ere long be *cut down* and *burnt*, be its branches ever so diffusive and its leaves ever so green.

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Christ hath *a fan in his hand* to winnow *us* as well as the *Jews*, O that we may stand the trial! And O that, as his *wheat*, we may be laid up in the store-house of heaven when *that day cometh* which shall *burn as an oven*, and when *all that do wickedly* shall be consumed as *stubble* and be *burnt up* as *chaff!* (Mal. iv. 1.)

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1 *Published these glad tidings.*] Ευηγγελιζετο has plainly this import; and as it was a very imperfect intimation, rather than a full discovery of the gospel that was given by the Baptist, it does not seem so proper here to render it by *preaching the gospel*, though the word has often that signification; see Mat. xi. 5. Luke iv. 18. and Acts viii. 4, &c.

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And to conclude: that we may be prepared for that final trial, let us be earnest in our applications to our gracious Redeemer, that as we are *baptized with water* in his name, he would also *baptize us with the Holy Ghost and with fire;* that, by the operations of his Holy Spirit on our cold and stupid hearts, he would enkindle and quicken that Divine life, that sacred love, that flaming, yet well-governed zeal for his glory, which distinguishes the true Christian from the hypocritical professor, and is indeed *the seal of God* set upon the heart to mark it for eternal happiness. SECT. XVI. Ver. 16

SECT. XVII.

The testimony John the Baptist gave to Christ is taken notice of by John the Evangelist, and his own testimony added to confirm it. John I. 15—18.

JOHN I. 15.

JOHN bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me:

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AS the Messiah now was shortly to appear, and the time just at hand in which he was to enter on his public ministry, the way (as we have seen) was opened for his coming by John the Baptist's being sent to preach the doctrine of repentance: and when the people came in crowds from every part to hear him, *John bore his testimony of him* in a public declaration of the dignity of his person and of the great design for which he was to come; which, though it was at first expressed in general terms, yet did he afterwards apply it in particular to Jesus of Nazareth, pointing him out to be the person he had spoken of; and, with an earnestness that suited the importance of this grand occasion, he openly proclaimed him to be the promised Messiah, *and cried, saying,* This is the person that I told you of; and *this is he of whom I said before*[a], (Mat. iii. 11.) *He that cometh after me,* as to the SECT. XVII. John I. 15.

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b *He*

SECT. XVII.

the time of his appearance in the world and of his entrance on the stage of public life, is upon all accounts superior to me, and *is* deservedly *preferred, before me; for*, though indeed as to his human birth he is younger than me, and did not come into the world till a little after me, yet, in a much more noble and exalted kind of being *he existed* long *before me*[b], or even before the production of any creature whatsoever.

John I. 15.

16 *And* I John the apostle, who had the honour of being numbered among his most intimate friends would, with pleasure, in my own name, and that of my brethren, add my testimony to that of the Baptist[c], as I and they have the greatest reason to do: for *of his* overflowing *fulness have we all received* whatever we possess, as men, as Christians, or as apostles; and he hath given us *even grace upon grace*[d], a rich abundance and variety of favours, which will ever make his name most dear and precious to our souls.

16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17 *For the law was given by Moses*, and we own it an honour to our nation to have received it, and to that holy man to have been the messenger of it; yet to the sinner it is a dispensation of death, and passes an awful sentence of condemnation upon him: [*but*] the Redeemer whom we celebrate is worthy of much more affectionate regards; for *grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*[e], who gives us an ample declaration of pardon

17 For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

[b] *He existed* long *before me;* πρωτός μου ἦν.] This must undoubtedly refer to that state of glory in which *Christ existed* before his incarnation, of which *the Baptist* speaks so plainly, Jo. iii. 31. as abundantly to justify the *paraphrase* (compare *note* b on John i. 30. sect. 21.) As for the preceding clause, ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, which we render, *is preferred before me*, I think Erasmus truly expresses the sense of it in supposing it to refer to those distinguishing honours which had been paid to Christ in his infancy, by *prophets*, *sages* and *angels* too, which nothing that had yet occurred in the life of John could by any means equal.

[c] I add my testimony to that of the Baptist.] It is most evident that what is said here in *this verse*, as Chrysostom justly observes, must be considered as the words of the *evangelist*. John the Baptist had never yet mentioned the name of Jesus; and the expression *we all* shews it could not be his words; for those to whom he addressed himself do not appear to have *received grace* from Christ. The last French version, with great propriety, includes ver. 15 in *a parenthesis*, and so connects this 16th *verse* with the 14th;—as if it had been said, *He dwelt among us—full of grace and truth;—and of his fulness have we all received.*

[d] *Grace upon grace.*] This seems the most easy sense of χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος, as ἀντ' ἀνιαγαίας is *grief upon grief*. (*Theogn.* v. 344.) Compare Ecclus. xxvi. 15—17. and see *Blackwall's Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 164. Next to this I should prefer Grotius's interpretation, who would render it *grace of mere grace:* that is, the freest grace imaginable.

[e] *Came by Jesus Christ.*] I cannot lay so much stress on the word ἐγένετο here, as opposed to ἐδόθη, as to suppose it, with Erasmus, to imply, that whereas Moses was only the *messenger* of the *law*, Christ was the *original* of the *grace and truth* he brought into the world by the *gospel*; since all that is intended by ἐγένετο is nothing more than that *it was*, or that *it came, by Jesus*

pardon and an abundant effusion of the Spirit, those substantial blessings of which the Mosaic dispensation was but a shadow. His gospel therefore should be received with the most cheerful consent; for *no man hath ever seen God*, nor indeed can see him, as he is an incorporeal and therefore an invisible Being; but *the Only-Begotten Son, who is* always *in the bosom of the Father*[f], and ever favoured with the most endearing and intimate converse with him, *He hath* revealed and *made him known* in a much clearer manner than he was before, by those discoveries of his nature and will which may have the most powerful tendency to form us to virtue and happiness.

18 No man hath seen God at any time; the Only-Begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

John. I. 18.

IMPROVEMENT.

HAPPY are they that (like this beloved *apostle*), when they hear the praises of *Christ* uttered by others, can echo back the testimony from their own experience, as having themselves *received of his fulness!* May an abundance of *grace* be communicated from him to us! We are not *straitened* in him; oh, may we not be *straitened* in ourselves; but daily renewing our application to him as our Living Head, may vital influences be continually imparted to our souls from him! Ver. 16

With pleasure let us compare the dispensation of *Jesus* with that of *Moses*, and observe the excellency of its superior *grace* and of its brighter *truth:* but let us remember, as a necessary consequence of this, that *if the despisers of Moses's law died without mercy, they shall be thought worthy of a much sorer punishment* and a more aggravated condemnation *who tread under foot the Son of God. (Heb.* x. 28, 29.) 17

May we ever regard him *as the Only-Begotten of the Father;* and, since he hath condescended so far as to come down from his very *bosom* to instruct us in his nature and will, let us with all humility receive his dictates and earnestly pray that, under his revelations and teachings, we may so *know God* as faithfully to serve him now and, at length, eternally to enjoy him. 18

SECT.

Jesus Christ, according to the sense in which the word is often used in other places; and διὰ here is used of Christ as well as of Moses: so that both are represented as *messengers*, though of very different dispensations.

[f] *In the bosom of the Father.*] Critics generally agree this is one of the places in which εἰς is put for ἐν; but had it here been rendered *near his Father's bosom*, it might as well have answered the design of the *original*, and would, I think, have been as expressive of that intimate converse and entire friendship which the phrase implies.—Elsner here cites a passage from Plato concerning the regard due to the authority of a *Son of* God when speaking of *his Father;* and it is indeed surprisingly apposite. *Elsn. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 296.

a *When*

SECT. XVIII.

Christ is baptized by John, and the holy Spirit descends upon him in a visible form. Mark I. 9—11. Mat. III. 13. *to the end;* Luke III. 21—23.

MARK I. 9.

SECT. xviii.

Mark I. 9.

AND it came to pass in those days, when great numbers of *all* ranks and professions among *the* Jewish *people were baptized*[a], *that Jesus came from* the town of *Nazareth in Galilee*[b], where he had lived for many years in a retired manner with his parents, to the river Jordan; and applied himself *to John, that he might be baptized by him*[c]: *and was* accordingly *baptized by John in Jordan*, near Bethabara; (see John 1. 28. sect. 20.)

14 Now the providence of God had so ordered it, to prevent all appearance of a combination between them, that John was personally a stranger to Christ. (John i. 33.) *But* nevertheless, as soon as he saw him, he received a secret intimation from above that this was the Messiah upon whom the Spirit should visibly descend; (see the note on John i. 33. sect. 21.) And, upon this account, such was the modesty of *John* that he was ready to decline the service, and *would have*

MARK I. 9.

AND it came to pass in those days [LUKE, when all the people were baptized] that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee [unto John, to be baptized of him] and was baptized of John in Jordan. [MAT. III, 13, LUKE III, 21.

MAT. III. 14. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

a *When all the people were baptized.*] John continued baptizing so long after this, that it is very evident the word *all* must be taken with the restriction used in the *paraphrase*, as it is oftentimes in other places.

b *Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee.*] The learned Dr. Thomas Jackson, in his elaborate examination of this context (see his works, vol. II. p. 515—519), supposes that John the Baptist, inquiring into and hearing the *name* of Jesus, and the *place* from whence he came, and comparing it in his own mind with that celebrated prophecy, Isa. xi. 1, 2. concluded that this Jesus, or *Divine Saviour*, as the word may signify (see *note* d on Mat. i. 21. p. 52.) coming from Nazareth, *the town of Rods*, as the etymology of that name imports, was *the rod out of the stem of Jesse*, upon whom *the Spirit* should *descend*, and rest like a dove on a branch. And thus he would reconcile John's address to Christ as so extraordinary a person, Mat. iii. 14, with his declaring (John i. 31, 33.) that he *knew him not* before: but this seems a very precarious solution, considering how possible it might be that in so large a place as Nazareth there might be several persons of the name of Jesus or Joshua, so very common among the Jews. It appears therefore much more reasonable to have recourse to the solution given in the *paraphrase* and *note* d on the last cited text, sect. 21. that he had a secret intimation given him who it was that came to be baptized by him; and all that this very ingenious writer has said to shew the various *marks* by which John might *know* Christ, without supposing such a particular *revelation* as is there suggested, does but confirm me the more in the necessity of admitting it.

c *That he might be baptized by him.*] By this he intended to do an honour to *John's ministry*, and to conform *himself* to what he appointed to his followers: for which last reason it was that he drank likewise of the *sacramental cup*. And this we may consider as a plain argument that *baptism* may be administered to those who are not capable of all the purposes for which it was designed. See Dr. Whitby's note on Mat. iii. 16.

d *The*

SECT. XVIII.

Mat. III. 14.

have hindered him from doing what he proposed; *and* accordingly *said* unto him, Thou art so much my superior, that *I have need to be baptized by thee* with that far nobler baptism which thou art to administer! *and dost thou come to me* on such an occasion as this? I am confounded at the thought, and cannot but consider it as too high an honour for me. *And Jesus, replying,* 15 *said unto him,* Though it be really as thou sayest, yet do not go about to hinder me, but *permit* [*it*] *now; for,* however unable thou mayest be at present to enter into the particular reasons of it, yet, in submission to the Divine appointments, it is decent for us *thus* to comply with all the duties of religion, and in this manner *it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness:* and upon this account, as it is a part of my duty to attend this institution, it is therefore a part of thine to administer it. *Then,* as John knew that it became him not to debate the matter any farther, *he permitted him* to be baptized.

15 And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

And after Jesus was baptized, as soon as he 16 *ascended out of the water* to the bank of Jordan, *behold, the heavens were* immediately *opened* [d] *unto him,* and in a wondrous way appeared as if they had been rent asunder directly over his head: and at that very instant, *as he was* looking up, and *praying* [e] in a devout and holy rapture; *and* as John was also fixing his eyes upon this wonderful sight, *he saw the Spirit of God,* [f] *in a corporeal form* [g], as a glorious and splendid appearance of fire, *descending* with a hovering motion

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him [LUKE, being baptized, and praying,] and he saw the Spirit of God descending [LUKE, in a bodily shape] like a dove, and lighting upon him. [MARK I. 10. LUKE III. 21, 22.]

[d] *The heavens were* immediately *opened.*] I think it plain (as Grotius and Blackwall have observed) that what is here intended is to intimate, that directly on his coming up out of the water the heavens were opened: for it must certainly appear to be a circumstance of small importance, and of very little use, for the *evangelist* to say that *Jesus went up straightway out of the water after he was baptized*; but, if we take it in the other way, it very fitly introduces the remarkable account of what directly followed it. There seems to be such a transposition of the word εὐθὺς, Mark i. 29. and xi. 2. See *Blackwall's Sacred Classics,* Vol. I. p. 89.

[e] *As he was praying.*] It is observable that all the three *voices from heaven,* by which the *Father* bore witness to Christ, were pronounced while he was *praying,* or very quickly after it. Compare Luke ix. 29.—35. and John xii. 28.

[f] *He saw the Spirit of God.*] There is no question to be made but that this wondrous sight was seen by both of them: for Mark has so expressed it as plainly to refer the *seeing it* to Christ; and John the Baptist has in another place assured us that *he saw it,* and took particular notice of it as *the sign* he was directed to observe as the distinguishing and certain characteristic of the Messiah. John i. 32—34, And I have therefore so expressed it in the *paraphrase,* as not directly to confine the sight of it to either.

[g] *In a corporeal form.*] This is the exact English of σωματικῷ εἴδει; a phrase, which might with propriety have been used, though there had not been (as most understand it) any appearance in the shape of the animal here mentioned, but only a *lambent flame* falling from heaven *with a hovering dove-like motion,* which Dr. Scott (in his *Christian Life,* Vol. III, p. 66) supposes to have been all, Dr. Owen and Grotius

SECT. xviii.

motion *like a dove, and coming upon him;* as a visible token of those secret operations of that Blessed Spirit on his mind, by which, according to the intimations God had given in his word, he was anointed in a peculiar manner and abundantly fitted for his public work. (Compare Psal. xlv. 7, and Isa. lxi. 1.)

Mat. III. 16.

22 *And*, as a farther testimony of the Divine regard to Christ and of the glorious dignity of his person, this was attended with a very memorable event: for, *behold, a* loud and awful *voice came out of heaven*, when it was thus opened, *which said, Thou art my beloved Son*[h], *in thee I am well pleased;* that is, I perfectly approve thy character, and acquiesce in thee as the Great Mediator, through whom I will shew myself favourable unto sinful creatures. (Compare Isai. xlii. 1.)

LUKE III. 22. And [lo] a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased. [MAT. III. 17. MARK I. 11.]

23 *And Jesus* at that time, *when* he received the baptism of John, and was *beginning* the public exercise of [*his ministry*,] was *about thirty years old*[i]; at which time he chose to quit his retirement, being then in the full vigour of nature, and having attained the age in which the priests used to begin their ministrations in the temple. (Compare Numb. iv. 3—47; and 1 Chron. xxiii. 3.)

23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age.

IMPROVE-

Grotius think it was a *bright flame* in the *shape of a dove;* and Justin Martyr (who adds, that all Jordan shone with the reflection of the light) says, that it was ἐν εἴδει περιστερᾶς; and Jerom calls it φασμα ὀρνιθος, *the appearance of a dove.* Both these phrases are much more determinate than the *original;* but I chuse to leave this, and many other things, in the same latitude as I find them.

h *Thou art my beloved Son.*] Both Mark and Luke express it thus; which inclines me to follow those copies of Matthew which agree with them, rather than the more common reading there, *This is my beloved Son.* Ευδοκησα properly expresses an *entire acquiescence* in him.

i *And Jesus, when beginning* [*his ministry*] *was about thirty years old.*] Of the age of Jesus at this time, see *note* b on Luke iii. 1. p. 94.—I can recollect no sufficient authority to justify our *translators* in rendering ην ωσει ετων τριακοντα αρχομενος, *began to be about thirty years of age*, or was now entering on his thirtieth year. To express that sense it should have been ην αρχομενος ετων, &c. as Epiphanius, probably by a mistake, has quoted it.—The learned author of the *Vindication of the beginning of Matthew's and Luke's gospel*, extremely dissatisfied with all the common *versions* and explications of these words, would render them, *And Jesus was obedient*, or living in subjection [*to his parents*] *about thirty years;* and produces several passages from approved *Greek writers*, in which αρχομενος signifies *subject.* But in all those places it is used in some connection or opposition which determines the sense; and therefore none of them are instances parallel to this. Luke evidently uses αρχομενων chap. xxi. 28. *in* the sense we suppose it to have here; and since he had before expressed *our Lord's subjection to his parents* by the word υποτασσομενος, chap. ii. 51, there is great reason to believe he would have used the same here, had he intended to give us the same idea. And indeed, if αρχομενος be allowed to have the signification which this accurate *critic* (for such he undoubtedly is) contends for here, since there is nothing in the text to limit it, the phrase would intimate he was *subject to none* after this time; an assertion which I should think both groundless and dangerous.—This clause of Luke has been already mentioned in another place where it was only inserted (out of its proper order) to complete the sentence: see sect. 9.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let our Lord's submitting himself to *baptism*, teach us a holy exactness and care in the observance of those positive institutions which owe their obligations merely to a Divine command; for *thus it* also *becometh us to fulfil all righteousness*; lest by *breaking one of the least* of Christ's *commandments, and teaching others to do it*, we become unworthy of a part *in the kingdom of heaven*. (Mat. v. 19.) SECT. XVIII. Luke III. 23 Mat. III 15

Jesus had *no sin* to confess or wash away, yet he was *baptized;* and God owned that ordinance so far as to make it the season of pouring forth *the Spirit* upon him. And where can we expect this sacred effusion, but in a conscientious and humble attendance on Divine appointments? 16

Let us remember in how distinguishing a sense *Jesus* is *the Christ*, the *anointed of God*, to whom *the Father hath not given the Spirit by measure*, but hath poured it out upon him in the most abundant degree. Let us trace the workings of this *Spirit in Jesus*, not only as a Spirit of miraculous power, but of the richest grace and holiness; earnestly praying that this *holy unction* may, from *Christ* our head, *descend* upon our souls! May his enlivening *Spirit* kindle its sacred flame there with such vigour that *many waters* may not be able to *quench it*, nor *floods* of temptation and corruption to *drown it*. Mark I. 10

Behold God's *beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased!* As such let us honour and love him; and, as such, let our souls acquiesce in him, as, in every respect, such a *Saviour* as our wishes might have asked and our necessities required. Luke III. 22

With what amazement should we reflect upon it that the blessed *Jesus*, though so early ripened for the most extensive services, should live in retirement even till his *thirtieth year!* That he deferred his *ministry* so long should teach us not to thrust ourselves forward to public stations till we are qualified for them, and plainly discover a Divine call: that he deferred it no longer should be an engagement to us to avoid unnecessary delays, and to give God the prime and vigour of our life. 23

Our Great *Master* attained not, as it seems, to the conclusion of his *thirty-fifth year*, if he so much as entered upon it; yet what glorious achievements did he accomplish within those narrow limits of time! Happy that servant who with any proportionable zeal dispatches the great business of life! so much the more happy if his *sun go down at noon;* for the space that is taken from the labours of time will be added to the rewards of eternity.

SECT. XIX.

Christ's victory over the temptations of Satan in the wilderness.
Luke IV. 1—13. Mat. IV. 1—11. Mark I. 12, 13.

LUKE IV. 1.

SECT. XIX.

THEN Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit, with which he had been just anointed in so extraordinary a manner, *returned from Jordan,* where he had been baptized; *and immediately* after this *was led by the* strong impulse of that *Spirit* on his mind *into* that desolate and solitary place *the wilderness*[a]; *that he might* there *be* exercised and *tempted by* the most violent assaults of *the devil;* and, by conquering him, might afford an illustrious example of heroic virtue, and lay a foundation for the encouragement and support of his people in their future combats with that malignant adversary.

Luke IV. 1.

LUKE IV. 1. AND Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and [MARK, immediately] was led by the Spirit [MARK, the Spirit driveth him] into the wilderness [to be tempted of the devil.] [MAT. iv. 1. MARK i. 12.]

Mark I. 13.

And he was there in the wilderness forty days: and during that time he was *tempted by Satan; and* also *was* surrounded *with* a variety of *the* most savage and voracious kinds of *wild beasts;* but they were so overawed by his presence that (as in the case of Daniel when in the den of lions, Dan. vi. 22) none of them offered him the least injury[b]: *and in* all *those days he did eat nothing* at all.

MARK i. 13. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts, [and in those days he did eat nothing.] LUKE iv. 2.

Mat. IV. 2.

And when he had thus *fasted forty days and forty nights,* as Moses the giver of the law, (Exod.

MAT. iv. 2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights,

a *Into the wilderness.*] Christ probably intended this as a devout retirement, to which he found himself strongly inclined, that might give vent to those sacred passions which the late grand occurrences of the *descent* of the *Spirit* upon him and the miraculous attestation of *a voice from heaven,* had such a tendency to inspire. It seems a very groundless conjecture of Mr. Fleming (in his *Christology,* vol. ii. p. 315) that he was carried through the air to mount Sinai. Mr. Maundrel's is much more probable, that it might be the *wilderness* near Jordan; which, as he, who travelled through it, assures us, is a miserable and horrid place, consisting of high barren mountains, so that it looks as if nature had suffered some violent convulsions there. (See *Maundrel's Travels,* p. 78.) This is the scene of the *parable* of the *good Samaritan.* (Luke x. 30.) Our Lord probably was assaulted in the northern part of it, near the sea of Galilee, because he is said here to be *returning* or going back to Nazareth, from whence he came to be baptized: Mark i. p. 108.

b None of them offered him the least injury.] It is strange that any should think he was during this time *hunted by the wild beasts:* this is the more improbable, as such a hurry would have been inconsistent with the design of God in leading him thither; which was, that he might be assaulted by Satan, at first probably by secret suggestions, the horror of which would be increased by such a gloomy place. *The angels* might be the instruments of intimidating the *beasts.* Could Dr. Lightfoot have proved what he asserts, that this happened in October or November, the cold would have been, as he suggests, an additional circumstance of affliction to our Lord: but it seems rather to have been in the beginning of Summer; see *note* b, on Luke iii. 1. p. 94. and *note* k, on Mat. iii. 4. p. 97.

c *The*

nights, he was afterwards an hungered, [LUKE iv. 2.] (Exod. xxxiv. 28.) and Elias the great restorer of it, had done before him, (1 Kings xix. 8.) having been thus far miraculously borne above the appetites of nature, *at length he* felt them and *was* very *hungry;* but was entirely unprovided with any proper food.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. [LUKE iv. 3.] *And* just at that time *the tempter coming to him*[c] in a visible form (putting on a human appearance, as one that desired to inquire farther into the evidences of his mission) *said, If thou art the Son of God,* in such an extraordinary manner as thou hast been declared to be, and art indeed the promised Messiah, who is expected under that character[d], *command that these stones become loaves* [*of bread*] to relieve thy hunger; for in such a circumstance it will undoubtedly be done. 3

4 But [Jesus] answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. [LUKE iv. 4.] *But Jesus answered, and said* unto him, *It is written* in the sacred volume, (Deut. viii. 3.) "*Man shall not live by bread only, but by every word proceeding out of the mouth of God,* or by whatever he shall appoint for the preservation of his life." He can therefore support me without bread, as he fed the Israelites in the wilderness[e]; and, on the other hand, even bread itself, if these stones were turned into it, could not nourish me without his blessing; which I could not expect, were I to attempt a miracle of this kind merely in compliance with thy suggestions, without any intimation of my Father's will. 4

5 Then the devil taketh him up into [Jerusalem] the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple; [LUKE iv. 9.] *Then,* as *the devil* found it was in vain that he had tempted Christ to a distrust of Providence, he was for trying to persuade him to presumption: and to this end he *taketh him* along with him[f] *to Jerusalem,* which, being the place where God dwelt in so distinguished a manner, was commonly called *the Holy City*[g]; and there he *setteth* 5

[c] *The tempter coming to him.*] Our *translation,* which in its rendering of these words is not so literal as the *version* I have given, seems to intimate, what is not any where asserted in the sacred story, that this was the *first time* the *tempter* came unto him; a circumstance which can hardly be supposed.

[d] The promised Messiah, who is expected under that character] That the Jews supposed the Messiah would be in a very extraordinary manner *the Son of God,* appears from comparing Mat. xiv. 33. xvi. 16. xxvi. 63. John i. 34, 49. xi. 27. xx. 31. and Acts viii. 37.

[e] As he fed the Israelites in the wilderness.] It is to this the passage that is quoted here hath a plain reference, as it stands in the Old Testament.

[f] *Taketh him* along with him.] This is the exact English of παραλαμβανει. (See *Elsner. Observ. in loc.*) But whether he did or did not *transport him through the air,* cannot, I think, be determined from this passage.

[g] *The holy city.*] This is a phrase that frequently, and very properly, is used to express Jerusalem. (Compare Neh. xi. 1. Isa. lii. 1. Dan. ix. 24. and Mat. xxvii. 53. The heathen writers, in like manner, often

SECT. XIX.

Mat. IV. 6.

teth him on one of the battlements of the temple[h], which in some parts of it, and particularly over the porch, was so exceeding high that one could hardly bear to look down from it[i]. *And* as he stood upon the brink of this high precipice, the tempter *saith unto him, If thou art* indeed *the Son of God, cast thyself down* courageously *from hence*, and mingle with those that are assembled for the worship of God in yonder court. The sight of such a miracle will undeniably convince them of the truth of thy pretensions; and thou canst have no room to doubt of thy safety; *for* thou well knowest *it is written*, (Psal. xci. 11, 12.) "*He shall give his angels a charge concerning thee, to keep thee*[k]; *and they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou shouldest* by any accident *dash thy foot against a stone.*" And surely the Son of God may depend upon a promise which seems common to all his saints.

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down [from hence] for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee [to keep thee] and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone, [Luke iv. 9, 10, 11.]

7 *And Jesus answering, said unto him, It is also written*, to prevent the ungrateful abuse of such gracious promises as these, (Deut. vi. 16.) "*Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*," by demanding farther evidence of what is already made sufficiently plain[l], as my relation to God is, by the miraculous and glorious testimony he hath so lately given me.

7 [And] Jesus [answering] said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. [Luke iv. 12.]

8 *Again, the devil* being resolved once more to attack him by the most dangerous temptation he could devise, *taketh him up into a mountain* in those parts, which was *exceeding high*; and from *thence, in a moment of time, sheweth him*, in an artful visionary representation, *all the* most magnificent *kingdoms of the world, and* all *the* luxury, and

8 Again, the devil taketh him up to an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, [in a moment of time.]—[Luke iv. 5.]

often call those cities *holy* in which any of their *deities* were supposed to hold their special residence and from whence their *oracles* were delivered. (See *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. i. p. 17, 18.

h *One of the battlements of the temple.*] Though *pinnacle* agrees very well with the etymology of the *Greek word*, yet, according to its use among us, it leads the English reader to imagine that he stood on the *point of a spire*. The truth is, the roof of the temple was flat, and had a kind of *balustrade* round it (see Deut. xxii. 8.) and somewhere on the edge of this *battlement* we may suppose that Satan placed Christ in his attacking him with this temptation.

i Hardly bear to look down from it.] Josephus gives us this account of it, *Antiq. Jud.* lib. xv. cap. 11. (al. 14.) § 5. p. 781. *Edit. Havercamp.*

k *A charge concerning thee, to keep thee.*] Many (after Jerom) have observed that Satan made his advantage of quoting scripture merely by scraps, leaving out those words, *in all thy ways*. The cause of truth, and sometimes of common sense, hath suffered a great deal by those who have followed his example.

l By demanding farther evidence of what is already made sufficiently plain.] That this is the purport of the phrase *tempting God*, is easy to be seen from comparing Exod. xvii. 2, 7. Numb. xiv. 22. Psal. lxxviii. 18. and Psal. cvi 14. See *Limborch. Theol.* lib. v. cap. 22. § 16.

m One

SECT. XIX.

Luke IV. 6.

and pomp, and *glory of them*; displaying to his view one of the finest prospects that the most pleasurable and triumphant scenes could furnish out.[m] *And*, with the most egregious impudence and falsehood, *the devil said unto him, All this* extensive *power* [*and*] *all these* splendid *things, will I give thee, and* all *the glory of them*, which thou hast now before thee; *(for it is* all *delivered to me*[n], who am the prince of this world, *and I give it to whom I please:)* And great as the gift is, I am so charmed with that wisdom and magnanimity which I have now observed in thee[o], that I propose to give it thee upon the easiest terms thou canst imagine; for all that I desire is that thou shouldest pay me homage for it: *if therefore thou wilt* but *fall down and worship me*, upon thy making this little acknowledgment to me, *all* these things *shall be thine.*

8 *Then Jesus*, moved with indignation at so blasphemous and horrid a suggestion, *answered and said unto him*, with becoming resentment and abhorrence, *Get thee hence, Satan*[p], and begone out of my sight, for I will no longer endure thee near me: *for it is written*, as a fundamental precept of the law, (Deut. vi. 13.) "*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*" It would therefore be unlawful thus to worship thee, who art no other than a mere creature, even though thou wast indeed

IV. 6. And vil said unto ll this power ese things] will thee, and the of them; for delivered unto d to whomso- will, I give it. IV. 9.] thou therefore fall down and] me, all shall e. [MAT. IV.

nd Jesus an- and said unto Get thee hence] ee behind me, for it is written, halt worship the y God, and him alt thou serve, IV. 10.]

ne of the finest prospects that the leasurable and triumphant scenes furnish out.] As Christ was proba- acked with this temptation upon nountain in the *wilderness*, this beau- nd taking prospect that was repre- to him, being set off by the horror place he was in, would in such a t appear peculiarly charming: see p. 112.

it is all *delivered to me.*] Grotius ll observed that this contains a vile ation that God had done what none ruly understands the nature of God he creature can suppose possible, y, that he had parted with the govern- of the world out of his own hands. we may add to this, that in the *text* Christ has quoted there is enough rthrow that notion; since God's ap- ating to himself the *worship* of all eatures, plainly implies his universal e and dominion over all, and the re- he has to the religious adoration and ence of all the subjects of his king- dom.—It is remarkable that, among other things which several *heathen* writers learnt of the *primitive Christians*, this was one; to represent *evil spirits* as tempting men from their duty by views of *worldly riches and grandeur*; over which, Porphyry in particular says, they often would pretend to much more power than they really have. See *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I, p. 18, 19.

o I am so charmed with that—which I have now observed in thee.] This seems the most plausible view in which the temptation could be introduced.—It is plain from the *next verse* that this was the *last temptation*; but Luke makes it the *second*: whence it evidently appears that Luke did not confine himself exactly to observe *the order of time* in his story; a remark of vast importance for settling the Harmony. See *note* g on Luke i. 3. p. 22.

p *Get thee hence, Satan.*] The word ὑπαγε plainly expresses his authority over Satan, as well as his detestation of so vile a suggestion.

q The

...deputy on earth; and how much more ... must it be so, as thou art in reality the great ... enemy of God and man[q]? for such, under ... thy disguise, I well know thee to be.

And when the devil had ended all the temptation we have given an account of, being so baffled and confounded as not to be able to present any others which seemed more likely to succeed, *he departed from him for a season*; yet secretly meditating some future assault. (Compare John xiv. 30)

13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

And, *then the devil having left him, behold,* a detachment of *angels came and waited upon him*[r], furnishing him with proper supplies for his hunger, and congratulating so illustrious a victory over the prince of darkness.

MAT. IV. 11. Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him. [MARK I.—13.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. IV. 1, & seq. WHO can read this account without amazement, when he compares the insolence and malice of the *prince of darkness* with the condescension and grace of the *Son of God!*

What was it that animated and emboldened *Satan* to undertake such a work? Was it the easy victory he had obtained over the *first Adam* in Paradise? or was it the remembrance of his *own fall,* from whence he arrogantly concluded that no heart could stand against the temptations of pride and ambition? Could he, who afterwards proclaimed *Christ* to be *the Son of the Most High God,* and had perhaps but lately heard him owned as such by *a voice from heaven,* make any doubt of his Divinity? Or, if he actually believed it, could he expect to vanquish him? We may rather conclude that he did not expect it; but, mad with rage and despair, he was determined at least to worry that *Lamb of God* which he knew he could not devour; and to vex with his hellish suggestions

q The great avowed enemy of God and man.] This odious character is intimated in the name *Satan*, which our Lord gives him, by which he made it to appear he knew him, however he might seek to be disguised. If we suppose him now to have worn the form of *an angel of light* (as 2 Cor. xi. 14,) it will make both this and the former temptation look more plausible: for thus he might pretend, in the former, to take the charge of Christ in his fall, as one of his celestial guards; and in this, to resign him a province which God had committed to *his* administration and care. And this may be consistent with supposing that he first appeared as *a man* (it may be, as a hungry traveller who pretended to ask the miracle of turning *stones* into *loaves* for his own supply), for *angels* under the Old Testament had often worn a *human form*, Compare Gen. xviii. 2. xix. 1. 10, 16. Josh. v. 13, 14. Judg. vi. 11, 12. and xiii. 3, 8, 10.

r *Angels came and waited upon him.*] The word διακονεω does often signify *to wait at table*; see Mat. vii. 15. Luke xvii. 8. xxii 27. and John xiii. 2.—As *one celestial spirit* might have been abundantly sufficient for the relief of *our Lord's* necessities, it is reasonable to suppose that the appearance of *a number of them* upon this occasion was to do him the more illustrious honour after this horrible combat with Satan, to which, for wise and gracious reasons, he was pleased to condescend.

suggestions, that innocent and holy soul which he knew he could never seduce. Wretched degeneracy! *How art thou fallen, O, Lucifer, son of the morning!* to be thus eagerly driving on thine own repulse and disgrace! SECT. XIX. Mat. IV. 1.

But, on the other hand, how highly are we obliged to our Great Deliverer, who hath brought forth *meat out of the eater*, and *sweetness out of the strong?* who can sufficiently adore thy condescension, *O blessed Jesus!* who wouldst permit thyself to be thus assaulted and led from place to place by an *infernal spirit*, whom thou couldest in a moment have remanded back to hell to be bound *in chains of darkness* and overwhelmed with flaming ruin! Ver. 5—8.

The *apostle* tells us why he permitted this: it was *that, having himself suffered, being tempted, he might* by this experience that he had of *Satan's* subtilty, and of the strength of his temptations, contract an additional tenderness and *be* the more inclined, as well as better *able, to succour us* when *we are tempted.* (Heb. ii. 18.) Let this embolden us to *come unto the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need.* (Heb. iv. 16.)

Let us remember and imitate the conduct of the Great *Captain of our Salvation;* and, like him, let us learn to *resist Satan,* that he may *flee from us.* Like *Christ*, let us maintain such an humble dependance on the Divine blessing as never to venture out of the way of it, be the *necessity* ever so urgent: nor let us ever expose ourselves to unnecessary *danger*, in expectation of extraordinary deliverance. Like him let us learn to *overcome the world*, and to despise all its pomps and vanities when offered at the price of our innocence. Ver. 3, 6, 8, 9.

To furnish us for such a combat, let us take *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* Let us not only make ourselves familiarly acquainted with the *words* of *scripture*, but let us study to enter into the true design and *meaning* of it; that so, if *Satan* should attempt to draw his artillery from thence, we may be able to guard against that most dangerous stratagem, and to answer perverted passages of *holy writ* by others more justly applied. 4, 7, 10. 6.

Once more; when the suggestions of *Satan* grow most horrible, let us not conclude that we are utterly abandoned by God, because we are proved by such a trial; since *Christ* himself was *tempted* even to *worship* the infernal tyrant. But in such cases let us resolutely repel the solicitation, rather than parley with it, and say in imitation of *our Lord's* example, and with a dependance on his grace, *Get thee behind me, Satan.* 9.

If our conflict be thus maintained, the struggle will ere long be over; and *angels*, who are now the spectators of the combat, will at length congratulate our victory. 10, 11.

SECT.

SECT. XX.

John the Baptist being examined by the great men among the Jews acknowledges that he was not the Christ; and refers them to one among them whom he confesses to be vastly his superior. John I. 19—28.

JOHN I. 19.

SECT. XX.

John I. 19.

WE have already taken notice of the honourable testimonies that were given by John in a more general way to the Messiah in his discourses to the people, before Jesus was baptized. We shall proceed to others that were more particular, which followed after that event; *and this* which we shall now produce *is the testimony of John, when* the sanhedrim or grand council of *the Jews at Jerusalem sent* some who were reckoned among the most venerable and holy men of the nation, even some of the *priests and Levites, to inquire of him*, saying, Tell us plainly *who art thou* that drawest such a crowd of people after thee, and pretendest to something so uncommon?

JOHN I. 19.

AND this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou?

20 *And* John, according to the natural plainness of his temper, presently replied to their inquiry; and with the utmost freedom *he* most readily *acknowledged, and did not* at all affect either to *deny* or to disguise his real character; *but* in the strongest terms he solemnly *protested*[a], *I am not the Messiah*, nor would I in the least pretend to arrogate to myself the honours which are due to none but him.

20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

21 *And*, upon this, *they* farther *asked him, What* art thou *then*, if thou art not the promised Messiah? *Art thou* the celebrated *Elijah*[b], come down from that abode in heaven to which he was miraculously translated (2 Kings ii. 11.) to introduce the great and terrible day of the Lord? (Mal. iv. 5.) *And* in reply to this *he said*, with the same plainness as before, Though it is true that I am come in the spirit and power of Elijah, yet

21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

[a] Solemnly *protested.*] The word ωμολογησεν is the same which is rendered *acknowledged* in the former clause; but being thus repeated, its signification seems to be heightened, especially by its opposition to ουκ ηρνησατο, *he denied not.*

[b] *Art thou* the celebrated *Elijah?*] It is plain by this question, that they were strangers to the parentage of *John the Baptist.* And with regard to the reply he makes to this inquiry, there is no scruple to be made, but that *the Baptist* might justly deny that he was Elijah, as he indeed was not that prophet, though he *came in his spirit.* See Luke i. 17. p. 33.

Art

SECT. XX.

John I. 21.

yet *I am not* he. And they again inquired of him, *Art thou a prophet* of the former generation raised from the dead[c]? *And he* directly *answered, No.*

22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us: What sayest thou of thyself?

Now as it only was in negatives that he had hitherto replied, *they said unto him therefore* yet once more, Tell us then plainly *who art thou? that we may* in a more direct and satisfactory manner *give an answer to them that sent us: What dost thou say concerning thyself?* And, that they might not be mistaken in his character, and might be wholly left without excuse if they regarded not the end for which he came, *he said,* *I am* (what I have frequently before declared myself to be) *the voice of one crying* here *in the wilderness*[d], and saying, *Make the way of the Lord* clear and *straight,* by removing every obstruction; for he is now appearing for such gracious purposes as demand the most cheerful reception; *as Isaiah the prophet said,* in a passage which you cannot but be acquainted with. (Isa. xl. 3)

22

23 He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord; as said the prophet Esaias.

23

24 And they which were sent, were of the Pharisees:

Now the messengers that came on this errand *were* of the sect *of the Pharisees;* who, as on the one hand they professed a great regard for the prophets, and believed their existence in a future state, so on the other hand they strenuously opposed

24

[c] *Art thou a prophet* of the former generation raised from the dead?] It is necessary that this question should be understood with such a limitation, because *John the Baptist* was really a very illustrious *prophet*, as we may plainly see from what is said by Christ himself, Matth. xi. 9. And this interpretation (which is largely vindicated by Castalio) seems much preferable to that of Theophylact and Erasmus, who, because of the *article* ὁ προφήτης, would render it as we do, *that prophet;* concluding without any proof, that the Jews understood Deut. xviii. 18, not of the Messiah himself, but of some *prophet* of considerable note, who was to introduce him: and Grotius has supposed the question that they offer to refer to Jeremiah, of whose return to life there was a mighty rumour that prevailed among the Jews. (Compare Matth. xvi. 14.) But I can see no reason to restrain it to a particular *prophet;* and since (as Limborch well observes in his *dispute* with Orobio the Jew) that text in Deuteronomy was the clearest and strongest in all the Mosaic writings to enforce the necessity of submitting to the Messiah, it is probable John would have corrected so great a mistake if they had put the question to him upon this presumption. The best French versions render it as I have done: and indeed it seems to me that the word *prophet*, in the *evangelists*, generally signifies one of those holy men who were the messengers of God to Israel of old; which especially appears from Mark vi. 15. where *to be a prophet*, and to be *as one of the prophets*, are spoken of as distinct, which they could not be but on this interpretation: and if the *alternative* ἢ be left out, and it be read as it is in some manuscripts and printed copies, *He is a prophet like one of the prophets*, there will be a foundation for the same remark, and *one of the prophets* must signify *one of the ancient prophets.*

[d] *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.*] The late Archbishop of Cambray beautifully illustrates the humility of this reply, as if this illustrious prophet had said, "Far from being *the Messiah*, or *Elias* or one of the *old prophets*, I am nothing but *a voice;* a sound that, as soon as it has expressed the thought of which it is the sign, dies into air, and is known no more." See *Fenel. Oeuvres Philos.* Vol. II. p. 193.

SECT. xviii. Mat. III. 16.

motion *like a dove, and coming upon him;* as a visible token of those secret operations of that Blessed Spirit on his mind, by which, according to the intimations God had given in his word, he was anointed in a peculiar manner and abundantly fitted for his public work. (Compare Psal. xlv. 7, and Isa. lxi. 1.)

22 *And*, as a farther testimony of the Divine regard to Christ and of the glorious dignity of his person, this was attended with a very memorable event: for, *behold, a* loud and awful *voice came out of heaven*, when it was thus opened, *which said, Thou art my beloved Son*[h], *in thee I am well pleased;* that is, I perfectly approve thy character, and acquiesce in thee as the Great Mediator, through whom I will shew myself favourable unto sinful creatures. (Compare Isai. xlii. 1.)

LUKE III. 22. And [lo] a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased. [MAT. III. 17. MARK I. 11.]

23 *And Jesus* at that time, *when* he received the baptism of John, and was *beginning* the public exercise of [*his ministry*,] was *about thirty years old*[i]; at which time he chose to quit his retirement, being then in the full vigour of nature, and having attained the age in which the priests used to begin their ministrations in the temple. (Compare Numb. iv. 3—47; and 1 Chron. xxiii. 3.)

23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age.

IMPROVE-

Grotius think it was a *bright flame* in the *shape of a dove;* and Justin Martyr (who adds, that all Jordan shone with the reflection of the light) says, that it was *ιν ειδει περιστερας*; and Jerom calls it *φασμα ορνιθος, the appearance of a dove.* Both these phrases are much more determinate than the *original*; but I chuse to leave this, and many other things, in the same latitude as I find them.

h *Thou art my beloved Son.*] Both Mark and Luke express it thus; which inclines me to follow those copies of Matthew which agree with them, rather than the more common reading there, *This is my beloved Son.* Ευδοκησα properly expresses an *entire acquiescence* in him.

i *And Jesus, when beginning [his ministry] was about thirty years old.*] Of the age of Jesus at this time, see *note* b on Luke iii. 1. p. 9[illegible]—I can recollect no sufficient authority to justify our *translators* [illegible] rendering [illegible] *began to be about thirty years of age,* so [illegible] on his thirtieth year. his [illegible] should have been *him n*[illegible] iphanius, carious [illegible] ed it.— [illegible] *ication of* [illegible] *'s gospel*, extremely dissatisfied with all the common *versions* and explications of these words, would render them, *And Jesus was obedient*, or living in subjection [*to his parents*] *about thirty years;* and produces several passages from approved *Greek writers*, in which αρχομενος signifies *subject*. But in all those places it is used in some connection or opposition which determines the sense; and therefore none of them are instances parallel to this. Luke evidently uses αρχομενων chap. xxi. 28. *in* the sense we suppose it to have here; and since he had before expressed *our Lord's subjection to his parents* by the word υποτασσομενος, chap. ii. 51, there is great reason to believe he would have used the same here, had he intended to give us the same idea. And indeed, if αρχομενος be allowed to have the signification which this accurate *critic* (for such he undoubtedly is) contends for here, since there is nothing in the text to limit it, the phrase would intimate he was *subject to none* after this time; an assertion which I should think both groundless and dangerous.—This clause of Luke has been already mentioned in another place where it was only inserted (out of its proper order) to complete the sentence: see sect. 9.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let our Lord's submitting himself to *baptism*, teach us a holy exactness and care in the observance of those positive institutions which owe their obligations merely to a Divine command; for *thus it* also *becometh us to fulfil all righteousness*; lest by *breaking one of the least* of Christ's *commandments, and teaching others to do it*, we become unworthy of a part *in the kingdom of heaven*. (Mat. v. 19.)

Jesus had *no sin* to confess or wash away, yet he was *baptized;* and God owned that ordinance so far as to make it the season of pouring forth *the Spirit* upon him. And where can we expect this sacred effusion, but in a conscientious and humble attendance on Divine appointments?

Let us remember in how distinguishing a sense *Jesus* is *the Christ*, the *anointed of God*, to whom *the Father hath not given the Spirit by measure*, but hath poured it out upon him in the most abundant degree. Let us trace the workings of this *Spirit in Jesus*, not only as a Spirit of miraculous power, but of the richest grace and holiness; earnestly praying that this *holy unction* may, from *Christ* our head, *descend* upon our souls! May his enlivening *Spirit* kindle its sacred flame there with such vigour that *many waters* may not be able to *quench it*, nor *floods* of temptation and corruption to *drown it*.

Behold God's *beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased!* As such let us honour and love him; and, as such, let our souls acquiesce in him, as, in every respect, such a *Saviour* as our wishes might have asked and our necessities required.

With what amazement should we reflect upon it that the blessed *Jesus*, though so early ripened for the most extensive services, should live in retirement even till his *thirtieth year!* That he deferred his *ministry* so long should teach us not to thrust ourselves forward to public stations till we are qualified for them, and plainly discover a Divine call: that he deferred it no longer should be an engagement to us to avoid unnecessary delays, and to give God the prime and vigour of our life.

Our Great *Master* attained not, as it seems, to the conclusion of his *thirty-fifth year*, if he so much as entered upon it; yet what glorious achievements did he accomplish within those narrow limits of time! Happy that servant who with any proportionable zeal dispatches the great business of life! so much the more happy if his *sun go down at noon;* for the space that is taken from the labours of time will be added to the rewards of eternity.

SECT. XXI.

great atoning sacrifice, of which the lambs, that by Divine command are daily offered in the temple, were intended to be types; *which* expiates and *takes away the sin*[a] *of the* whole *world*, and is set forth to be a propitiation, not only for the Jews, for whom alone the sacrifices of the law were offered, but for the Gentiles too, that through his name whosoever believeth in him may receive remission of sins. And I now point him out, and tell you, *This is he of whom I* formerly have *said*, That *after me there comes a man who is* to be *preferred* abundantly *before me*, as being one that is incomparably greater and more excellent than I; *for he existed* long *before me*[b]. (Compare John i. 15, 27. p. 105, 120.)

John I. 29.

30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man, which is preferred before me; for he was before me:

30

31 *And*, till the time of his appearance in a public way, *I* was a stranger to him, and *did not* personally *know him*; for it was ordered so by Providence that, notwithstanding the relation which there was between us, we were not brought up in any intimacy of acquaintance with each other[c]; *yet* in the general I was aware of his intended approach; and it was chiefly *for this end*, with a particular regard to him, that *I came* (as you see) *baptizing with water*, *that he might* thus

31 And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore I am come baptizing with water.

[a] *The Lamb of God, which* expiates and *takes away sin.*] It is well observed by the author of that excellent treatise, called *Christ the Mediator*, that this is the only sense in which *a lamb* can be said to *take away sin*. Many suppose this refers to the *paschal lamb*; but that was not in its chief intention so much an *expiatory*, as an *eucharistical sacrifice*. Grotius strangely enervates the force of this text, by chusing to explain it of that reformation of the lives of men, to which Christ did not only press them by the doctrine that he taught, but gave them an example of it in his death, *redeeming them* (as it is said) *from their vain conversation with his own precious blood.* (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) Whereas there is not any thing more evident, than that the great design for which he died, was to *atone for sin*, and to exempt us from the punishment that our iniquities deserved; that, having *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself* we might have *redemption through his blood*, even *the forgiveness of our sins*. Compare Heb. ix. 26, 28. Eph. i. 7. and Col. i. 14.

[b] *For he existed before me.*] Dr. Hammond abundantly vindicates this interpretation. Had πρωτος here, as in some other places, signified *chief*, ἀρχι, not πρ, would have been joined with it, and *John the Baptist* would have said *he is*, and not *he was my chief*, which would apparently have been a very flat tautology, instead of a reason; whereas *Christ's having existed before John*, though he was *born after him*, was a most convincing proof that he was a very extraordinary person, and was the strongest reason that could well have been assigned to shew that he was worthy of their superior regard. Compare *note* [b] on John i. 15. p. 106.

[c] We were not brought up in any intimacy of acquaintance with each other.] This was very surprising, considering how nearly related they were to each other, and how remarkable the conception and birth of both of them had been, as well as what frequent interviews they might have had at the yearly feasts at Jerusalem. There seems to have been a particular hand of Providence in thus preventing that acquaintance that might otherwise have grown up to an intimacy and tenderness of friendship, which in the eyes of a prejudiced and censorious world might have rendered John's testimony to Christ something suspected. It is probable that both Zacharias and Elizabeth died while John was very young; and then he might soon forget Jesus, though he had seen him in his infancy.

thus *be* more remarkably *made manifest to Israel*, and might be introduced with greater solemnity. SECT. XXI.

32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him:

And John proceeded at the same time, while Jesus was before him, and *bore* his *testimony* to him, *saying*, This must be certainly the Son of God; for I declare, that when he was baptized *I* plainly *saw the* Holy *Spirit*, in a surprising token of his presence, *descending*, with a hovering motion *like a dove, from heaven, and it abode upon him.* John 1.32.

33 And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

And that you may not suspect any confederacy between us, I repeat the assurance which I but just now gave you, that *I did not* personally *know him: but* as he was approaching to me, I had a secret intimation given me[d] that it was he whom I should see to be distinguished by this sign; for *he that sent me to baptize with water*, as an earnest of that nobler baptism which is now soon to be expected, even that God whose messenger I am, *he said unto me* by an unquestionable revelation, This is the sign that I will give thee, that *upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending* in a corporeal and miraculous appearance, *and remaining upon him, this is he that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.* 33

34 And I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God.

And I saw this sign with my own eyes; *and* upon this convincing evidence it is that I *have testified* already, and still go on to testify, *that this is* really *the Son of God*, who is come into the world in a human form to accomplish the great work of redemption and salvation; who is therefore most reverently and affectionately to be received by us, as we regard his Father's protection and favour. 34

35 Again the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples:

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God.

Again it came to pass *on the next day*, that *John was standing* near the same place, *and two of his disciples* at that time were with him[e]: *And looking stedfastly at Jesus*[f], *as he was walking* at some little distance, *he* takes occasion to repeat his former declaration, and *says* to his disciples, that he might lead them to a due regard to Christ, *Behold the Lamb of God*, whom I before 35 36

[d] I had a secret intimation given me.] The supposition of this, which is so perfectly agreeable to John's prophetic character, easily reconciles this text with John's respectful speech to Christ when he came to be baptized (Mat. iii. 14. p. 108), as Jansenius, and before him, Chrysostom, observed.

[e] *Two of his disciples* were with him.] It plainly appears by ver. 40, that Andrew was one of these; and perhaps John, the beloved apostle, might be the other; who being the penman of this gospel, does frequently conceal his name. Compare John xiii. 23. and xx. 2.

[f] *Looking stedfastly on Jesus.*] This seems the most exact signification of the word ἐμβλέψας, and I have thus translated it again in ver. 42.

SECT. XXI.

I before have represented as the great expiatory sacrifice for the sins of men.

John i. 37. *And when the two disciples* that were with him *heard him speak* such high and honourable things of Christ, they took such notice of it that *they* immediately went on and *followed Jesus*, who was then returning to a lodging which he had

38 at a small distance from that place g. *And Jesus turning back, and seeing them* intent on *following* and coming after [*him,*] *says to them*, not to discountenance and turn them back, but to encourage and invite them to a free converse with him, *What do you seek?* and what may be the business that you have with me? And *they said to him*, with the greatest reverence and respect, *Rabbi, (which being translated* from the Syriac, which was the language that was then spoken by the Jews, *is* the same with *master,)* may we have leave to ask thee *where dost thou dwell?* for we are desirous of making thee a visit, that we may enter into some conversation with thee, which would not be so proper or convenient in this public way. And, pleased to

39 hear of the inquiry they made, *he says unto them, Come* with me now, *and see* where it is I lodge; for you shall both be welcome to attend me home. And *they* most readily complied with his kind invitation, and *came and saw where he dwelt*, taking particular notice of the place; and they went in *and continued with him* all the remainder of *that day; it being* then *about the tenth hour*, or four in the afternoon; so that they had an opportunity of spending the whole evening in conversation with him abundantly to their delight and satisfaction.

40 Now *Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter*, who will make so considerable a figure in this history, *was one of the two* disciples *that heard John* [*speak of Jesus*] in the manner we have before

41 related, *and followed him*. And so exceedingly was he transported with the pleasure that he found in his acquaintance with him, that he was ready to impart the joyful news to others, to whom he knew it would be welcome; and hastening

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 Then Jesus turned and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day; for it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first findeth his

g A lodging at a small distance from that place.] As Jesus was a person who had no attendants, and was a stranger in this country, we may conclude that he had only some obscure and private *lodging* here; which must have been at no great distance from the place where John baptized, as may be gathered from his appearing there from day to day. And by this means he did an honour to John's ministry, and had an opportunity of receiving his testimony.

his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, (which is, being interpreted, the Christ.)

tening to communicate it to his friends, as the most acceptable tidings he could bring them, *he first findeth his own brother Simon*[h], *and tells him* with the greatest joy, *We* certainly *have found the* promised *Messiah; (which being translated* from the Hebrew or the Syriac tongue, *is the Christ*, or the Anointed One.)

SECT. xxi.

John i. 41.

42 And he brought him to Jesus: and when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas (which is, by interpretation, a stone.)

And, that his brother Simon might be satisfied of the truth of what he told him, *he brought him unto Jesus: and Jesus looking stedfastly upon him*, as if he had read in his countenance the traces of his character and of his future service in the church, *said*, at his coming to him, *Thou art Simon the son of Jonas*[i]; and *thou shalt* also *be called Cephas; (which* in the Greek may be expressed by Peter, and *signifies a rock;)* a name well adapted to his character upon account of that resolute and patient firmness with which he should maintain the cause of the gospel; and which also expressed the use which should afterwards be made of him, as he should prove in subordination to Christ one of the great foundations of the church.

42

IMPROVEMENT.

LET our faith daily behold *Jesus* under the character of *the Lamb of God*, a Lamb indeed *without blemish and without spot;* by whose *precious blood* we are *redeemed*, as by an infinitely more valuable ransom than *silver and gold.* (1 Pet. i. 18, 19) As such let us humbly apply to him to *take away our sins*, and rejoice that (as the apostle *John* elsewhere expresses it) *he is the propitiation, not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world;* all ages and nations being interested in the benefit of his atonement. (1 John ii. 2.)

Ver. 29

Let

[h] *He first findeth his own brother Simon.*] This is a much more literal translation of Ευρισκει ουτος πρωτος τον ιδιον αδελφον Σιμωνα, than that of the *new translation* in 1727, which renders it, *The first that he found, or happened to meet with, was Peter.*— He may perhaps be called *his own brother* to distinguish him from some other that belonged to the family, who possibly might be his brother-in-law, or was related to him only in half blood. Peter was so remarkable a person that it might be proper to tell us who was the first means of bringing him acquainted with Christ; and if John was the other disciple that is here referred to, he might mean this as an humble intimation that Andrew's zeal was in this respect greater than his own. We may observe here by the way, that Peter was not *the first* of *Christ's disciples*, (in which the Papists would have been ready to have gloried), but that another was the means of bringing him to an acquaintance with Jesus.

[i] *Thou art Simon.*] Some have thought that Christ intended an allusion here to his name Simon, which may signify *a hearer*, intimating the candour and impartiality with which he was willing to *hear Christ's* instructions; (see Dr. Clark's note.) But I did not express this in the *paraphrase*, because it is not certain. Perhaps *our Lord* only meant to shew that, though he had never seen him before, he knew his name and his family. Compare ver. 48, and John iv. 15, 19.

SECT. XXI.

Let us consider him as *anointed* by the *Holy Spirit*, and as *baptizing* his church with it; and learn, after the example of *John the Baptist*, to bear our *testimony* to him again and again, with
Ver. 33 continued steadiness and growing zeal.

& *seq.* 39 Our satisfaction in him, as the great and only Saviour, will surely grow in proportion to our acquaintance with him. If Divine grace hath discovered him to us, and taught us to repose the con-
41 fidence of our souls upon him, let us, like *Andrew* in the passage before us, be concerned to make him known to others; and especially to lead our nearest relatives and our most intimate friends into that acquaintance with him which is so absolutely necessary to their eternal happiness!

39 Let the condescending readiness with which our blessed Redeemer accepted and even invited the visit of these *two disciples*, engage every preacher of righteousness most willingly to give his private as well as his public labours and his time (valuable as that treasure is) to the service of those who are seriously affected with the concerns of their souls, and are inquiring after the way to salvation. We are sufficiently honoured, if, by any means, and by all, we may be instrumental in promoting that cause which employed the daily labours of God's incarnate Son, and at length cost him his very blood!

SECT. XXII.

The calling of Philip, and the interview of Christ with Nathaniel. John I. 43, *to the end.*

JOHN I. 43.

SECT. XXII.

THE next day after he had met with Peter, *Jesus determined to depart from thence*[a] *to Galilee*, and there to enter on his public ministry; *and* at his coming thither he *findeth Philip*, whom he intended for one of his most intimate companions, *and says unto him, Follow me*; which, being secretly influenced by his grace[b], he

John I. 43.

JOHN I. 43.

THE day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

a *Determined to depart from thence*; ἠθέλησεν ἐξελθεῖν.] The force of the word θέλω seems to be something greater than *our translation* expresses; and there are several other texts which may suggest the same remark. (Compare Mat. xiv. 5. xix. 17. xx. 14. Luke iv. 6. xxiii. 20. John iii. 8. v. 21, 40. vii. 17. viii. 44. xvii. 24. xxi. 22. and 2 Tim. iii. 12.) Perhaps it may here intimate that *our Lord* on this occasion broke through the importunity of some who would rather have persuaded him to continue at Bethabara for the advantage of farther testimonies from the Baptist, or to have gone to Jerusalem, where they might imagine that his ministry would have been opened more honourably than in Galilee. Compare John vii. 3, 4.

b Being secretly influenced by his grace.] When we consider how suddenly some of *Christ's disciples* left their stated employments to follow him (according as we read Mat. iv. 18—22. Luke v. 27, 28. and xix. 5, 6.) it seems reasonable to allow some singular kind of impression on their mind (as

SECT. XXII.

John I. 44.

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

he accordingly did. *Now Philip was* an inhabitant *of Bethsaida*, which was a town of Galilee on the sea of Tiberias, and was also *the city of Andrew and Peter*, who have already been particularly mentioned: and by his calling these disciples he gave an intimation of his purpose of making some longer stay in that country.

45 Philip findeth Nathaniel, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

And *Philip*, after he was thus become a follower of Christ, *findeth* his pious friend *Nathaniel*, who was also of Galilee, and lived in a town of it which was called Cana (John xxi. 2.) *and says unto him, We have found him* who has so long been earnestly expected by us, even that illustrious and extraordinary Person *whom Moses* gave us an account of *in the law, and* whom *the prophets* also *have described*[c] in such a strong and lively manner; and with the greatest joy I am come to tell thee I know him who he is, [*even*] *Jesus the son of Joseph*, who comes *from Nazareth*, and is undoubtedly the promised Messiah. 45

46 And Nathaniel said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

And when *Nathaniel* heard that he was one of Nazareth, his prejudice against the place was such that he was ready to conclude that Philip was mistaken; and he therefore *said unto him, Can any good thing* at all, and especially any such great and glorious blessing as this, *come out of* a place so infamous as *Nazareth*[d]? And *Philip says unto him*, Do not suffer yourself to be borne away by a vain popular prejudice, but *come and see;* converse with him yourself, and you will soon be satisfied. 46

47 Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.

Now when *Jesus saw Nathaniel coming towards him*, (though there was no personal acquaintance between them) at the first sight of him he presently discerns what was his real character, *and says concerning him*, so loud that he might easily hear it, *Behold* here cometh *one* [*that is*] *truly an Israelite* (compare Rev. iii. 9. 47

(as there was in the calling of Elisha, 1 Kings xix. 19---21.) which though for the present it superseded the necessity of arguments, yet did not exclude their attending to that afterwards which might be necessary to defend their conduct to others.

c *Whom Moses—and the prophets have described:* ον εγραψε Μωσης και οι προφηται] This is a very literal *translation;* for γραφω frequently is used in the same sense elsewhere, and in particular is justly rendered thus, Rom. x. 5. (Compare Josh. xviii. 9. Judg. viii. 14. and Ezra vii. 23. *Septuag.*)

d A place so infamous as *Nazareth.*] As Nathaniel was a native of Galilee, it appears from hence that the Galileans themselves had but an ill opinion of Nazareth, as worse than the rest of that country; and indeed, by the figure its inhabitants make in the *evangelists*, they seem to have deserved it. See Luke iv. 16, 28, 29. and Mat. xiii. 54, *& seq.*

SECT. xxii.

9. and John viii. 39.) a person that indeed deserves the honourable title of one of God's people, and is worthy of his descent from Jacob his pious ancestor, as being a plain and upright man *in whom there is no deceit* either towards God or man. (See Gen. xxv. 27.)

John I. 47.

48 *Nathaniel*, perfectly surprised at such an unexpected testimony, presently *says*, with all the natural frankness of his temper, *to him, Whence dost thou know me*, or how canst thou at once thus undertake to answer for the most secret part of a stranger's character? *Jesus replied, and said unto him*, I am not so entirely a stranger to thy character as thou art ready to suppose, nor do I take it merely from uncertain report; for *before Philip called thee, I saw thee when thou wast* alone *under the fig-tree*[e]; and as I was present in Spirit to observe what passed in that secret retirement, I know how well thou deservest the testimony which I have now borne to thine integrity.

48 Nathaniel saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.

49 *Nathaniel* was so struck with this express reference to what he knew none could be witness to but God and his own conscience, that all his prejudices were at once removed; and he immediately *replied* to Christ, *and says*, with all that openness and candour that was so natural *to him, Rabbi*, from this one circumstance I cannot but believe all that my friend hath told me concerning thee; and therefore I not only honour thee as a wise and holy teacher, but am convinced that *thou art the Son of God*; yea, that *thou art* the promised Messiah, whom we so earnestly have been expecting as *the King of Israel*; for surely such Divine knowledge can be lodged in no meaner person[f].

49 Nathaniel answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.

And

e *When thou wast under the fig-tree.*] I see no reason at all to think, with Heinsius, that the conviction produced by these words in the mind of Nathaniel proceeded from the allusion he perceived them to bear to Zech. iii. 10. *In that day ye shall call every man his neighbour, under the vine, and under the fig-tree.* It was Christ's saying that he *saw him there* that struck his mind in so powerful a manner; and it is very probable that he was then employed in some secret devout meditations. See *Dr. Evans's Christian Temper*, Vol. II. p. 343.

f Such Divine knowledge can be lodged in no meaner person.] Just thus the *woman of Samaria* argued, John iv. 29. *Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?* which plainly intimates that they supposed the Messiah would be endowed with the most perfect knowledge, and have the gift of prophecy in the highest degree. There was a great deal of courage in Nathaniel's making such a declaration, if it was before a mixed company: for Christ's assuming the title of *the Son of God* was afterwards interpreted to be no less than blasphemy, John x. 36. and xix. 7.

s *Verily*,

50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

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John I. 50.

And *Jesus* upon this *replied and said unto him*, *Dost thou believe* me to be the promised Messiah, and the Son of God, merely *because I told thee* that *I saw thee under the fig-tree? Thou*, who discoverest so honest and teachable a temper, *shalt see* much *greater things than these* to prove it. *And he* accordingly proceeds and *says*, not 51 only *unto him*, but unto all that were then present with him, *Verily, verily, I say unto you*[z], and solemnly declare it as a most certain truth, to be regarded with the most diligent attention, and received as coming from the mouth of one who is truth itself, That *from this time you shall see* such a surprising train of miracles[h] wrought by me in the whole course of my succeeding ministry, that it shall seem as if *heaven* was *opened, and* all *the angels of God* were continually (as they appeared in vision to Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 12.) *ascending and descending*[i] [*to wait*] *upon the Son of man*, and to receive and execute his orders: and thus you will be furnished with a most convincing proof that, humble as the form of my present appearance is[k], I am indeed the

[z] *Verily, verily, I say unto you:* αμην αμην, λεγω υμιν.] There is no doubt but that these words are to be taken for a solemn affirmation; in which it is observable that John has constantly repeated the *amen*, while it is only mentioned once by the other *evangelists*. And this we may suppose him to have done, either to excite the greater attention, or in a more emphatical and stronger manner to assert the *truth*, not only of the thing affirmed, but of the person that affirms it. For as *amen* in Hebrew signifies *truth*, Isa. lxv. 16, so Christ, as being *the true and faithful witness*, is called *the Amen*. Rev. iii. 14. This repeated asseveration therefore may be considered as an intimation to us, not only that the saying unto which it is prefixed *is true*, but that we should regard it as proceeding from *the true and faithful Witness*. See *Dr. Lightfoot's Harmony*, and *Hor. Heb. in loc.*

[h] *From this time you shall see* a train of miracles.] Accordingly within *three days* one glorious *miracle* was performed by Christ at Cana of Galilee; which being the town to which Nathaniel belonged, there is great reason to believe he was present with the rest of *Christ's disciples* at it. Compare John ii. 2, 11. sect. 23.

[i] *The angels of God ascending and descending.*] If Nathaniel was, as some have thought, the person afterwards called *Bartholomew*, and made an *apostle* (see *Lightfoot's Hor. Heb.* on Matth. x. 3.) he must regard the vision of *angels* attending *Christ's ascension* as a glorious accomplishment of these words, as his final appearance at the day of *judgment, when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him*, will yet more eminently be. Compare Matth. xxvi. 64. where απ' αρτι so plainly signifies *hereafter*, that I much question whether it might not justly have been rendered so here; but where I am dubious, I always chuse the more extensive sense, in which (as here) the more limited is generally comprehended.

[k] Humble as the form of my present appearance is.] Though it be very true, as Dr. Sykes has excellently proved at large, that the phrase *Son of man* does generally refer to the glorious *kingdom* over which Christ was to preside, according to the prophecies of Daniel, yet I think it equally evident that it is originally used in the Old Testament in a sense that carries something of *humiliation* in it. See Job xxv. 6. Psal. viii. 4. cxliv. 3. Isa. li. 12. and especially Psal. lxii. 9. where we justly translate BENEI ADAM, *men of low degree*. A multitude of texts, as well as this before us, appear with great advantage when this remark is attended to; though Le Clerc cannot by any means be vindicated in confining his interpretation so entirely to this latter view.

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the illustrious Person foretold under that title, and am intended for that glorious throne, around which the highest angels shall account it their honour to appear as humble attendants, when the whole world shall be convened before it.

John I. 51.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 46 How cautiously should we guard against popular prejudices, which possessed so honest a heart as that of *Nathaniel*, and led him to suspect that the blessed *Jesus* himself was an impostor, and that *no good* could be expected from him because he had been brought up at *Nazareth!* But his integrity prevailed over that foolish bias, and laid him open to the conviction of evidence, which a candid inquirer will always be glad to admit, even when it brings the most unexpected discovery.

47 How amiable is the character here given of *Nathaniel! An Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!* May the attainment of so excellent a character, and a resemblance to him in it, be the daily aim and emulation of all who have the honour to be called into the *Israel of God!*

48 A constant intercouse with God in secret devotion will be a happy expression of one branch of this sincerity, and an effectual means of promoting the rest. Let it therefore be our care that the eye of him that *seeth in secret* may often behold us in religious retirement, pouring out our souls before God, and humbly consecrating them to his service. The day will come when those scenes of duty which were most cautiously concealed shall be commemorated with public honour; and when he who now discerns them, and is a constant witness to the most *private* exercises of the *closet*, *will reward them openly*. (Matth. vi. 6.)

51 Happy were those who *saw the miracles* performed by the *Son of man* while he was here on earth! and happy those favourite spirits of heaven which were *ascending and descending* as *ministers of his to do his pleasure!* But in some degree yet happier are they *who, having not seen, have believed;* John xx. 29. As their *faith* is peculiarly acceptable, it shall ere long be turned into *sight.* They shall behold much *greater things* than ever were seen below, and more extraordinary manifestations of his glory than they can now conceive; and, being brought with all his people to surround his throne, shall join in those nobler services which attendant *angels* render him above.

SECT.

SECT. XXIII.

Christ attends a marriage feast at Cana in Galilee, and miraculously changes water into wine. John II. 1—11.

John II. 1.
AND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there.

John II. 1.

NOW the third day after Christ's coming into Galilee, and discoursing there with Nathaniel in the manner we have related above, *there was a marriage at Cana*, a town *in Galilee*,[a] which originally belonged to the tribe of Asher (Josh. xix. 28,) *and* Mary *the mother of Jesus was there*;[b] it being the marriage of a near relation or an intimate friend of hers. *And Jesus, and* those of *his disciples* that were with him, (namely the two disciples that had followed him from the banks of Jordan, with Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel,) being known to be in the neighbourhood, *were invited to the marriage*: and Jesus, not affecting the austerities which became the character and ministry of John the Baptist, freely accepted of the invitation, and favoured them with his instructive presence.

SECT. XXIII. John II. 1.

2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

2

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

Now, as it was known that Jesus would be present at the feast, this, in conjunction with the events which had lately arisen, occasioned a greater resort of company than was expected; *and when the wine* provided for the entertainment of the guests *fell short, the mother of Jesus*, who either had seen some of his miracles in private, or received from him some hint of his intention now[c], thought proper to inform him of it,

3

[a] *Cana, a town in Galilee.*] It lay toward the southern part of the land of Asher (Josh. xix. 28.) and might be called *Cana in Galilee*, to distinguish it from another town of that name in Cœlosyria mentioned by Josephus. *Antiq. Judg.* lib. xv. cap. 5. (al. 6.) sect. 1. p. 751. *Havercamp.*

[b] *The mother of Jesus was there.*] Some have supposed this marriage to be celebrated at the house of Cleopas or Alpheus, whose wife was sister to the mother of our Lord, (John xix. 25,) and one of whose sons was *Simon the Cananite*, whom some have thought to be so called from his being an inhabitant of this *Cana*. (Mark iii. 18.) And this may be considered as the more probable, as Mary was not only present at the feast, but was concerned about supplying them with wine; and when the feast was over, we are told at ver. 12. that Jesus was attended, at his leaving Cana, not only with his own *disciples*, but with *his brethren*, or his nearest kinsmen, who probably came thither as *relations*, to be present at the marriage.---As Mary here is spoken of alone, it may be reasonable to conclude that Joseph was now dead, and that he lived not to the time when Jesus entered on his public ministry, especially as he is no where mentioned in the gospel afterwards. See *Dr. Lightfoot's Harmony, in loc.*

[c] Either had seen some of his miracles in private, or received some hint, &c.] Without supposing the one or the other of these, one can hardly imagine why she should thus apply *to him* on this occasion. For she could scarce suppose he had money to buy any large quantity; nor would it have been so proper to have done it if he had, lest it should have been interpreted as an affront to the bridegoom. But the supply that she expected

SECT. XXIII.

it, and *says unto him*, Son, dost thou observe *they have no wine* to carry on the feast?

John II. 4.

But *Jesus*, not approving it, that she should take upon her to direct him in the exercise of his miraculous power, *says* freely *to her*, with an air of serious rebuke, and in a plainness of language suited to the simplicity of those ages and countries, *O woman*[d], *what hast thou to do with me*[e], thus to direct me how and when my miracles are to be wrought? Let me now say it once for all, this is a thing that does not lie within thy proper sphere; and in particular, for what is now proposed, *my time* of doing it *is not yet come*;[f] but it is best to wait a little longer, and leave it to my conduct to determine when it will be the fittest and the most convenient season for me to interpose.

4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 In this *his mother* readily acquiesced, as conscious to herself that she had been over hasty in the proposal; but yet, as she inferred from his answer that he intended them some extraordinary

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

expected from him was by his working of a *miracle*; and it is plain that, notwithstanding the rebuke she justly met with, yet she had still a view to this by her direction to the *servants* afterwards, ver. 5. to do whatever he should order them.

[d] *O woman.*] We have no reason to conclude that there was any rudeness in his addressing to his mother thus. For though indeed it is a manner of expression that is very unusual among us, to call a person *woman*, when we are speaking to her, if she be one to whom we think that any respect is due; yet some of the politest writers of antiquity make the most well-bred and accomplished princes use it in their addressing unto *ladies* of the highest quality; and even *servants* too are sometimes represented as speaking to their *mistresses* in the same language. There are some instances of this referred to in *Blackwall's Sacred Classicks*, Vol. I. p. 206. to which many more might easily be added.

[e] *What hast thou to do with me?*] Some have thought, τι εμοι και σοι, might be rendered, *What is that to me and thee?* "What does it signify to us, or what concern is it of ours, if they want wine?" But Jesus was of so benevolent a temper, and Mary seems to be so far concerned as a relation, that it does not in this sense appear to be so proper a reply. It seems rather to be intended as a rebuke to Mary; and it was surely expedient she should know that Jesus was not upon such occasions to be directed by her. And nothing is more evident than that the *phrase* in other places has the meaning that *our version* gives it. See Matth. viii. 29. and Judges xi. 12. 2 Sam. xvi. 10. 1 Kings xvii. 18. 2 Kings iii. 13. and ix. 19. *Septuag.*

[f] *My time is not yet come.*] Some are for adding a note of *interrogation* here (as Gregory Nyssen does) and so would render it, *is not my time yet come?* As if he had said, "Am I not old enough to know when to work *miracles?* and now that I have entered on my public ministry, *is it not time* that I should be exempt from thine authority, and should be left to govern my own actions without any direction." But I conceive the sense in which it is generally taken to be more natural and easy: and I would rather chuse to understand it of the *time* when he intended to perform *this miracle*, for which the proper moment, though very near, was not yet quite come; than to refer it in a more general way to the *time* of his *doing miracles in public*, or more particularly to restrain it to the *time* of his *sufferings*, which Christ indeed has elsewhere called *his hour*, and which Mr. L'Enfant supposes him here to intimate that he would not anticipate by provoking the Jews too soon; for thus it would have implied a denial of his *mother's* request, which it is plain from ver. 5. she did not apprehend, and which the event shews that Christ did not design.

SECT. XXIII.

John II. 5.

dinary supply, she *says unto the servants*, with some degree of authority, as being in part concerned in managing the feast, *Whatever he shall order you*, see that you carefully *do it*; for he may have reasons for it beyond what you imagine.

6 And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins a-piece.

6 *Now there were set there*, near the room in which the feast was kept, *six water-pots* or jars *of stone*, from whence the water might be taken that was made use of by the guests to wash their hands and feet, and that was necessary for the washing of the cups and other vessels that were used at table, *according to the Jewish custom of purifying*, which in some instances was grown to such a superstitious nicety[g] as to require a considerable quantity of water to be ready upon such occasions: these jars were therefore of a considerable bigness, *containing each of them two or three measures*[h]. And *Jesus* chusing, for wise reasons, to make use of these[i] rather than the vessels in which the wine had before been contained, after some convenient pause, that the failing of the wine might be the more observed, goes to the servants that were waiting, and *says to them*, *Fill* up *those jars with water*, *And they filled them up to the very brim*. *And*, having presently transformed the water by his Divine power into excellent wine, *he says unto them*, *Now draw* some of it *out*, *and carry it to the president*

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

[g] Was grown to such a superstitious nicety.] Besides the *purifications* that were appointed by the law of God, there was a multitude of others that were then practised in compliance with the tradition of the elders. Compare Mark vii. 3, 4. and see *Godwin's Moses and Aaron*, lib. iii. cap. 11. § 4.

[h] *Two or three measures.*] The *measures* of the ancients are so very uncertain, that it is hardly possible to determine the exact content of these vessels. Some have computed them to contain about *two or three hogsheads*; and it is rendered so in *our translation* as to make them contain above *a hundred gallons*. But it is hardly probable the vessels were so large; and as the word μετρητας signifies no more than *measures*, it is much better we should leave it as we find it, unless the quantity could be determined with more certainty. It seems most probable that, as the Jewish *bath* was the most common *measure* that was used in *liquids*, this is the quantity designed where *measures* are expressed without any limitation. And as the Jewish *bath* is reckoned to contain *four gallons and a half*, the content of these vessels, if they are computed only at *two measures each*, will amount to no less than *fifty-four gallons*, which may be reckoned a sufficient quantity. See *Dr. Lightfoot's Harmony, in loc.* and *Godwin's Moses and Aaron*, lib. vi. cap. 9. *ad fin.*

[i] Chusing to make use of these.] Jesus might rather chuse to make use of these *large vessels*, thus to add to the dignity of the *miracle* by the liberal quantity of *wine* produced; which we have no reason to believe was all drank that day. If the *feast*, as was usual, lasted several days (Gen. xxix. 27, 28. and Judg. xiv. 12—17.) a considerable expence might by this means be saved, and an equivalent given for the additional charge of entertaining so many of his *disciples*. Not to say that this would prevent any suspicion that the tincture or taste of the *water* might be derived from any remainder of *wine* in the vessels; for indeed the goodness of the wine thus made would be sufficient to obviate such a thought.

SECT. xxiii.

sident of the feast. And, in obedience to the orders Jesus gave them, *they carried* [*it*] to him.

John II. 9. *Now when the president of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it came (though the servants that drew the water* very well *knew)*, observing that it had a finer flavour than any they had drank before, *the president of the feast calls for the bridegroom*, at whose expence he reckoned that this wine had

10 been provided, *And says unto him*, thou hast acted to-day in a very uncommon manner, for *every man* that makes a feast *first sets out the good wine, and when they have drank plentifully*[k], so that their taste is not so delicate as before, *then* brings out *that which is worse; [but] thou hast kept the good wine until now*, and towards the conclusion of the feast surprisest us with what is much better than we have yet tasted. This naturally gave the bridegroom an opportunity of declaring that he knew nothing of this new supply; which occasioned an examination of the servants, and so a discovery of what Christ had done in it.

This was the *beginning of* his public *miracles*[l], which *Jesus wrought* (as we have now related) *in Cana of Galilee, and* thereby *manifested his glory; and* that in such an illustrious manner that *his disciples believed on him* more stedfastly than before, as the fact was so certain and so remarkable.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

IMPROVE-

k *When they have drank plentifully.*] Though μεθυσθωσιν often signifies *to drink to excess*, yet it would be very unjust and absurd to suppose that it implies here that these guests had already transgressed the rules of temperance. None can seriously imagine the *evangelist* so destitute of common sense as to represent Christ as *displaying his glory* by miraculously furnishing the company with *wine* to prolong a *drunken revel*. It is much more reasonable to conclude that it signifies here (as it does in Gen. xliii. 34. Cant. v. 1. and Hag. i. 6. *Septuag.*) only *to drink* so *freely* as innocently to exhilarate the spirits. And even this perhaps might only be the case of some of them, and particularly not of those who, drawn by a desire to converse with Jesus, might be but lately come in.

l *This beginning of* his public *miracles.*] This interpretation seems much preferable to that of Grotius, who only supposes that this was the *first miracle* wrought at Cana, another being afterwards mentioned (John iv. 46. sect. 31), for it is plain there must have been a long series of *miracles* wrought here to justify such a manner of speaking, which doth not at all appear to have been the case. It rather seems to be here represented only as *the first* of his *public miracles*; for it seems probable that the necessities of the family might sometimes have engaged him to have done something miraculous for its relief *in private*. See *note* c, p. 131.

IMPROVEMENT.

WE have here *the first* of *Christ's public miracles*, which we find was not wrought till about his *thirtieth year*. How much sooner could he have glorified himself, and amazed the world by the display of his Divine power? But he waited his Father's call, and the delay added at length to the lustre of his works. SECT. XXIII.

It was performed to grace *a nuptial solemnity:* and who doth not see that it was, in effect, a testimony borne to the honour and purity of that happy state on which so much of the comfort of the present generation and the existence of the future regularly depends? Ver. 1

How happy were these *guests* while *Jesus* was among them! and how condescending did he appear in making one on the occasion! His social and obliging temper should sweeten ours, and be a lesson to his followers that they avoid every thing sour and morose, and do not censure others for innocent liberties at proper seasons of festivity and joy. 2

If *his mother* met with so just a rebuke for attempting to *direct* his administrations in the days of his flesh, how absurd is it for any to address her as if she had a right to *command him* on the throne of his glory? And how indecent for us to direct his supreme wisdom as to the time and manner in which he shall appear for us in any of the exigencies of life? 3, 4

Her submission and faith manifested on this occasion are truly amiable: and with this we have surely reason to admire the benignity and generosity of *Christ* in this *miracle* before us; who consulted the pleasure and entertainment as well as the necessity of his followers; and by this abundant supply amply repaid any extraordinary expence which he might have occasioned to the family. 5

How easily could he, who thus *turned water into wine*, have transformed every entertainment of a common table into the greatest delicacies, and have regaled himself daily with royal dainties? But, far superior to such animal gratifications, he chose the severities of a much plainer life. Blessed *Jesus!* who can say whether thou art greater in what thou didst or in what thou didst not do? May none of us thy followers be too intent on indulging our taste or any of our other senses; but, pursuing those intellectual and devotional pleasures which were *thy meat* and *thy drink* on earth, may we wait for that *good wine* which thou reservest for thy people *to the last*, and for those richer dainties with which thou wilt feast those who shall *drink it with thee in thy Father's kingdom!* (Mat. xxvi. 29.) 7, 8, 10

SECT. XXIV.

Our Lord celebrates the first passover of his public ministry at Jerusalem: and vindicates the outer court of the temple from the profanation of those that bought and sold there. John II. 12, *to the end.*

JOHN II. 12.

SECT. XXIV.

John II. 12.

NOW, *after* Jesus had attended at *this* marriage, where he miraculously turned the water into wine, *he and his mother, and his brethren* (or his near relations) *and his disciples*, who were now ready to attend him wheresoever he should go, *went down* from Cana *to Capernaum*, a city that lay near the north part of the sea of Galilee, on the south border of the land of Naphtali: *and* at this time the stay they made was but short,

13 for *they continued there not many days.* *And* the reason of their leaving it so soon was that *the passover of the Jews drew near*[a], when it was ordered by the law of Moses that all the males should appear before the Lord (Exod. xxiii. 17. and Deut. xvi. 16.) *and* therefore *Jesus*, who maintained a religious regard to the ceremonial as well as the moral part of the law, *went up to Jerusalem* to worship at the temple.

14 *And*, at his coming thither, *he found, in the* outer court and cloysters of the *temple, those that*, under

JOHN II. 12.

AFTER this, he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples; and they continued there not many days.

13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen,

[a] *The passover of the Jews drew near.*] As the *evangelists* have not expressly determined the *number* of *passovers* which happened between the *baptism* and *death* of Christ, or during the course of his *public ministry*, so it is well known that learned men have been much divided in their opinions about them. By far the greater part have supposed there were *four*; reckoning this the *first*; the *feast* mentioned, John v. 1, the *second*; the *passover* spoken of, John vi. 4, as the *third*; and that, at which Christ suffered, the *fourth*. But there are others of a different opinion. The celebrated Sir Isaac Newton reckons *five*; the *first*, this which is now before us; the *second*, according to him, happened four months after Christ's discourse with *the woman of Samaria*, John iv. 35. the *third*, a few days before the story of the *disciples rubbing the ears of corn*, Luke vi. 1. the *fourth*, a little after the *feeding of the five thousand*; and the *last*, at the time of our Lord's *crucifixion*. The reasons for this the reader will find at large in *Sir Isaac Newton's Observat. on Proph.* **Part I. chap. 11. and the most considerable** of them will be touched upon in their proper places.—Mr. Manne has with great learning and ingenuity attempted to revive a long exploded notion, that *Christ's ministry continued but sixteen months*; (see *Manne's second Dissertation*, p. 146, *& seq.*) so that there were but *two passovers* during the whole course of it. Mr. Whiston's reasoning against this *hypothesis*, in the *sixth* of his late dissertations, appears to me unanswerable. For he there shews that, if this was true, Christ must have travelled on an average near *ten miles a day* during the course of his ministry. Besides, the *transpositions* in scripture which this would introduce, seem very unwarrantable and dangerous; and, among other difficulties, it is none of the least that Mr. Manne is obliged to suppose that Christ only *purged the temple* at his *last passover*, and consequently that St. John has misplaced this story; though ver. 24, of *this chapter*, and ver. 22, 23, 24, of the *next* (sect. 27,) afford such strong arguments to the contrary. Compare *note* [e] and *note* [m] of this *section*.

oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

under a pretence of accommodating such as came to worship there with proper sacrifices, *sold oxen, and sheep and doves* [b]; *and* he also saw there *the money-changers sitting* at their tables, who, for a certain profit, changed any foreign coin into that which was current, and larger pieces of money into half shekels, which were on some occasions to be paid into the sacred treasury. (Exod. xxx. 15.) Now, at the sight of this, Jesus was moved with a just indignation to think that so sacred a place, honoured with such peculiar tokens of the Divine presence, should be profaned in this audacious manner, and so great an affront be put on the devout Gentiles, in whose court this market was kept; *and* therefore, *having made a whip of* the *small cords* (with which they were used to tie the beasts to some rings fixed in the pavement for that purpose) *he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen,* which they had brought into it; *and* he also *poured out the money of the exchangers, and overturned the tables* at which they were sitting. *And* he *said to them that sold doves, Take* all *these things away from hence* directly; [*and*] *do not,* for shame, *make my Father's house,* by such scandalous practices as these, *an house of* public *traffic,* and turn it to a common market-place or exchange. Now, by his saying this, he openly proclaimed that God was his Father [c], and made such a declaration

SECT. XXIV.

John II. 14.

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changer's money, and overthrew the tables;

15

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

[b] *Sold oxen, and sheep, and doves.*] There must have been a grand market for these animals at such times; for Josephus tells us that no less than 256,500 victims were offered at *one passover;* see *Joseph. de Bell. Jud.* lib. vi. cap. 9. (al. vii. 17. § 3. p. 399.) *Edit. Havercamp.*

[c] He openly proclaimed that God was his Father.] The most considerable argument which Mr. Manne has brought to prove that this *expulsion of the merchants* from the *temple* happened only in *our Lord's last passover,* and consequently that it is here *transposed,* is, that such an open declaration that *the Temple* was *his Father's house* would have put him too much into the power of his enemies, and would have been inconsistent with the prudent reserve which Christ kept on this head (see *Manne's Dissert.* p. 179, 180, and compare *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity,* p. 91, & *seq.*) as well as with the reflection of *his brethren;* John vii. 3, & *seq.* the *notes* on which place in sect. 98. may be consulted here.)—But, in reply to this objection, I would beg leave to observe, (1.) That for Jesus to call the temple *his Father's house* did not amount to an express declaration that he was the Messiah; since the Jews in general spake of God as *their Father,* John viii. 41. (See John x. 24, 25. with the *note* there, sect. 134.) And (2.) That though, in the circumstances that here attended it, there was an oblique intimation of something extraordinary, it might not be so dangerous now as afterwards; because *our Lord* not having opened the *spiritual* nature of his *kingdom,* or as yet rendered himself obnoxious to the Pharisees by such just invectives as he afterwards used, they who expected the Messiah to appear about this time and longed for his appearance, might be inclinable for a while to wait the issue of Christ's pretensions, and so much the rather, as he now wrought some wonderful miracles. (Compare ver. 23, and chap iii. 2.) Accordingly we find in the beginning of the *next chapter* one of the chief among the Pharisees comes privately to confer with Christ in a very respectable manner. It seems necessary to acquiesce in these solutions, because the conference which

SECT. XXIV.

declaration of his Divine mission as could not but be greatly observed by the multitude. *And his disciples*, when they saw so meek a person in such an unusual transport of just displeasure, *remembered that it was written* of David [d], in words which well expressed the character of Christ on this occasion, (Psal. lxix. 9.) "*The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up;*" as if it were said, A regard for the honour of thy sanctuary, like a secret flame glowing in my bosom, preys upon my spirits and would have consumed me, had I not given it vent.

John II. 17.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

18 A fact so public and remarkable as this could not but immediately come to the knowledge of the priests and rulers of *the Jews* [e], whose supreme council sate in a magnificent chamber belonging to the temple [f]: some of them *therefore* when they heard of it, *answered and said unto him*, By what authority dost thou thus take upon thee to reform what is amiss here, and *what sign dost thou shew us, seeing that thou dost these things*, to prove thy having a Divine commission, since it is certain thou hast none from the government? *Jesus answered and said unto them*, You shall not want convincing evidence that I have an authority far superior to what man can give me; for if you *demolish this temple*, I promise *and* assure you *I will raise it up* again *in three days* [g]. *The Jews then said* unto him, in proud derision and contempt of what they did not understand, *This temple hath been* no less

18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in

which refers to the *miracles* wrought at this *feast* is expressly said to have been before John the Baptist was imprisoned. Compare John iii. 22—24. sect. 27.

d *Remembered that it was written* of David.] That these words were originally spoken of David, and not of Christ, is plain from the *fifth verse* of the lxixth Psalm; *O God, thou knewest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee;* which cannot be applied to Christ. Abundance of other *scriptures* are quoted, with such a beautiful accommodation as this.

e Rulers of *the Jews.*] It seems most probable that the Jews here mentioned were *rulers*, because we know that the great assembly of Jewish rulers (that is, *the sanhedrim*) sat in the *temple*, and that the chief of them often attended public worship there. This action of Christ (in *driving out the buyers and sellers*) must undoubtedly come to their knowledge; and as their office would seem to *authorize* them to call him to an account, we are sure their prejudices against him would *incline* them to do it.

f A magnificent chamber belonging to the temple.] This fine *rotundo* was called, from its beautiful pavement, *Lishcath-Haggazith*, and stood on the wall of the temple, part of it within and part of it without its sacred precincts. See *Calmet's Dictionary* at the word *Sanhedrim*; *Lightfoot's Description of the Temple*, chap. 9. and *Witsii Miscell. Sacr.* lib. i. Diss. iii. § 66.

g *Demolish this temple, and I will raise it up in three days.*] It is most evident that Christ intended nothing more in these words than the *paraphrase* expresses, and did not mean to *command* them to *demolish the temple*; though his enemies indeed did, some years after, misrepresent this saying, as if he had intimated a purpose of doing it himself. Compare Mark xiv. 58. sect. 185.

This

in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

less than *six and forty years building*[h], (for it is now so long since Herod began to repair it) and notwithstanding many thousand men have been employed upon it, it is not yet entirely finished; *and wilt thou* undertake to *raise it up in three days?* None certainly will be foolish enough to pull it down to try the experiment. *But* they were quite mistaken in the sense of what he said; for what they understood him to have spoken of the temple at Jerusalem, *he spake of the* much more sacred *temple of his* own *body*, in which the Deity dwelt in a far nobler manner than in their holy place (Col. ii. 9.) and he might give some intimation of it in the gesture that he used in speaking. *When therefore he was risen from the dead*, just on the third day after his crucifixion, *his disciples remembered that he had said this to them; and they* yet more firmly *believed the scripture* in all its prophecies concerning the Messiah's kingdom, *and* their faith in him was confirmed by *the word which Jesus had spoken:* for such a wonderful event as the resurrection of Christ, considered in its connection with this solemn prediction[i], justly appeared as the fullest conceivable proof of his Divine mission.

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John II. 20.

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

21

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them: and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

22

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast:

And while he was at the passover in Jerusalem, on the feast-day, many of the Jews who were then present there, *seeing the miracles which he wrought,*

23

h *This temple hath been six and forty years building.*] Mr. Whiston (in his *View of the Harmony*, p. 143.) would render it, *Forty and six years hath this temple been built:* but, as it would have been absurd to argue from the time since the temple was built to the time it would require to rebuild it, this sense must certainly be wrong; and Dr. Lightfoot has well shewn that the word οἰκοδομήθη may signify (as we render it) it hath been so long building. *Hor. Hebr. in loc.*—Mr. Fleming's calculation (in his *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 366—371.) to prove that the *second temple* was *forty-six years building*, is not only very precarious, but also very unnecessary; for the words refer to the time since Herod began to rebuild it, which he first proposed to the people in the eighteenth year of his reign (*Joseph. Antiq. Jud.* lib. xv. cap. 11. (al. 14.) § 1. *Havercamp*); and though he finished what he proposed in eight or nine years, it seems (as Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Lardner have judiciously observed) that the Jews still went on improving and adorning it: for long after this, under the government of Florus (about the year of Christ 65), Josephus speaks of the temple's being finished, and the workmen dismissed: so that it seems they were at work upon it all the time of Christ's ministry and life. (Compare John viii. 59. sect. 105. John x. 31. sect. 134. and see *Joseph. Antiq. Jud.* lib. xx. cap. 9. (al. 8.) § 7. p. 978. and *Lardner's Credib.* Part. I. Vol. I. p. 534—559. and Vol. II. p. 856—860.) Now, as the eighteenth year of Herod's reign from the death of Antigonus began some time in *A. U. C.* 734. and his proposal to rebuild the temple might then be made to the Jews at the feast of tabernacles, it will from thence be but a few months more than *forty-six years* to the *passover*, *A. U.* 781. Or, since a year or more might probably be spent in preparing for the work before he actually began it, it may thus be brought down to *A. U.* 782 or 783, which is the lowest time to which this *passover* can be referred.

i The resurrection of Christ considered in its connection with this solemn prediction.] This important thought is set in a very strong light by Dr. Jenkins, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*. Vol. I. p. 25, 26.

k *Seeing*

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John II. 24.

wrought [k], *believed in him* [l], and were inwardly persuaded that he was the Messiah: *But Jesus did not* care to *trust himself to them* [m], so far as to acknowledge it expressly that he was actually the promised Messiah; and, by confessing who he was, to put himself into their power, *because* 25 *he knew* them *all*, *And had no need that any one should testify* or tell him any thing of the character *of* any *man*, though ever so much a stranger to him: *for he* himself, by an immediate and unerring penetration, *knew what was in* the heart of every *man*; and consequently knew that those people had such gross notions of the Messiah's kingdom, that there was no room for him to confide in them, or to expect them to be faithful to him.

feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*,

25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 14 How powerful is the love of this world, when it could engage even the *priests* and the *Pharisees* to let out *the temple* itself for a *market-place!* though a professed *zeal* for the honour of it made so great a part of the *righteousness* of which they boasted before 15, 16 God. But *our Lord* beheld the scene with *just indignation*; as that displeasure is indeed *just*, which arises from a sense of dishonour done to God and contempt poured on the institutions of his worship. Happy shall we be in the warmest emotions of *zeal* which do not transport us beyond the rules of prudence and love, and make us forget those stations in life which require the same principles to shew themselves in widely different effects!

Methinks the state of the *temple*, when these *traders* had erected *their seats* and their *stalls* in it, and turned the courts of *God's house* 16 into a *market*, is too just an emblem of the state of our *hearts* when we appear in the sanctuary distracted with *worldly cares* to the neglect of that *one thing needful*, which then demands our most attentive regards. Would to God that in this sense *our Father's house* were not often made *a house of merchandize!* Let us pray that *Jesus*, by his good Spirit, would assert it to himself, and *drive out* those intruders which break in upon our truest enjoyments, in proportion to that degree in which they intrench on our devotion!

After

k *Seeing the miracles which he wrought.*] These words, as also those in John iii. 2. and iv. 45. plainly refer to some miracles wrought by Christ, the particulars of which are not transmitted to us.

l *Believed in him.*] It is in the original, *believed in his name*; a *Hebraism*, which it did not seem necessary to retain. Nothing is more common than to put the *name* of a person for the *person* himself. Compare John i. 12. xx. 31. Psal. lxxv. 1. Acts i. 15. and Rev. iii. 4.

m *Did not trust himself to them.*] I look upon this as a demonstration that the *passover* here spoken of was not that at which *Christ suffered*; for then there had been no need of such a precaution, and indeed no room for it.

After a thousand proofs of his Divine mission, the *Jews* were wicked and desperate enough, with sacrilegious hands to *destroy the temple of Christ's body:* but let us be thankful for the undoubted evidence we have, that, as an everlasting monument of his power and truth, he *raised it again in three days!* SECT. XXIV. John II. 25.

Happy will it be for us if we cordially *believe* a gospel so gloriously attested; but most vain will that belief be which doth not penetrate and influence the heart. Let us remember that we have to do with him, that formed our nature and is most intimately acquainted with all its recesses. *He knows what is in man:* may he see nothing in us which shall not be thoroughly agreeable to the profession we make of being his faithful disciples! 23, 25

To conclude; let us learn, from the *caution* which *Jesus* used, not rashly to put ourselves and our usefulness into the power of others; but to study a wise and happy medium between that universal prejudice and *suspicion*, which, while it wrongs the best and the most worthy characters, would deprive us of all the pleasures of an intimate friendship and that undistinguishing *easiness* and openness of temper which might make us the property of every hypocritical pretender to kindness and respect. 24

SECT. XXV.

The former part of our Lord's conference with Nicodemus, in which he states the nature and necessity of regeneration. John III. 1—10.

JOHN III. 1.

THERE was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

JOHN III. 1.

NOW, while our Lord was thus attending at Jerusalem to keep the passover, *there was a* certain *man of the* sect of the *Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a magistrate of the Jews,* and a member of the great sanhedrim, (John vii. 50,) who being alarmed, as many of his brethren were, and filled with wonder at the miracles that Jesus wrought, made him a visit in person, that he might more distinctly be informed of the nature of his doctrine and of the true intent and purpose of his coming. But, lest any offence should be taken at his conversing openly with him, *he* secretly *came to Jesus by night,* in order to a private conference with him at his own lodgings; *and* with the greatest reverence and respect, he *said unto him,* in his own name as well as in the name of several of his brethren, *Rabbi*[a], the SECT. XXV. John III. 1. 2

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

[a] *Said unto him, Rabbi.*] This title cannot but appear very remarkable, as given by a person of so great dignity to one, who, with regard to his education and rank in secular

SECT. XXV.

the wonders thou hast done have been related to us; and, having seriously considered the account that has been given us, *we know* and cannot but allow *that thou art a teacher come* with a commission *from God: for* we are thoroughly convinced that *none can* ever *do these* wondrous *miracles* that are in all respects so beneficial and Divine, *which* we perceive *thou doest, unless* he be invested with a power from on high, and *God* himself *be with him* in an extraordinary manner. (See John ix. 30, 33.) I am come therefore to desire a more particular account [b] from thine own mouth, both of the doctrine which thou teachest and of the kingdom which thou declarest God is about to erect.

John III. 1.

3 *Jesus*, knowing the prejudices he laboured under both as a Jew and a Pharisee, judged it necessary immediately to acquaint him with the absolute necessity of a thorough change, by Divine grace, both in heart and life; a change so great as might appear like coming into a new world, and would bring the greatest and most learned men to the simplicity of little children. (Compare Mat. xviii. 3.) He therefore *answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee*, and declare it with the utmost solemnity as a truth of the highest importance, That whatever great privileges any may inherit by his natural birth, or how exact and strict soever he may be in ceremonial observances, *unless a man be born again* [c] *he cannot* possibly *see the kingdom*

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

secular life, made so low an appearance as our blessed Lord did.

b I am come to desire a more particular account, &c.] *Our Lord's* answer intimates that he either expressly made, or secretly intended such an inquiry; and it is impossible to enter into the beauty of this discourse without considering it in this view. *Our Lord* touches on the following grand points, in which it was of the utmost importance that Nicodemus and his brethren should be informed—That no external profession, nor any ceremonial observances or privileges of birth, could entitle any to the blessings of the *Messiah's kingdom*;---that an entire change of heart and life was necessary to that purpose;---that this must be accomplished by a Divine influence on the mind;---that mankind was in a state of condemnation and misery;---that the free mercy of God had given his Son to deliver them from it, and to raise them to a blessed immortality, which was the great design and purpose of his coming; that all mankind, that is, Gentiles as well as Jews, were to share in the benefits of his undertaking;---that they were to be procured by his being lifted up on the cross, and to be received by faith in him;---but that if they rejected him there was no other remedy, and their eternal aggravated condemnation would be the certain consequence of it.—*Our Lord* might enlarge more copiously on *these heads:* which it might be the more proper to do, as some of them were directly contrary to the notions commonly entertained by the Jews concerning the *Messiah's kingdom.*

c *Unless a man be born again;* εαν μη τις γεννηθη ανωθεν.] Some would render ανωθεν, *from above;* but it is plain that Nicodemus did not take it so; for he thought that, without *entering a second time into his mother's womb*, there was no being *born* in the manner Christ spoke of, ανωθεν, that is, *again.*—What is added at ver.

SECT. XXV.

kingdom of God in such a manner as to secure an interest in its invaluable blessings.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?

Now, as this form of speech was figurative and concise, *Nicodemus* did not understand what it meant; and therefore *says unto him, How can a man be born* again *when he is old*, as I now am? *Can he* possibly *enter a second time into his mother's womb and* so *be born* over again? It would be perfectly absurd to think that thou intendest this should be taken in a literal sense; and I confess I am at a loss to know what figurative interpretation is to be put upon it. John III. 4.

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Then *Jesus*, to explain his former meaning, *answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee*, and again repeat it, That *unless a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;* or, in plain terms, whosoever would become a regular member of it, he must not only be baptized, but as ever he desires to share in its spiritual and eternal blessings, he must experience the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit on his soul, to cleanse it from the power of corruption and to animate it to a Divine and spiritual life. 5

6 That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.

For were it possible for a man to be born again, in the literal sense that you have mentioned, by entering a second time into his mother's womb, such a second birth would do no more to qualify him for the kingdom of God than the first: for *that which is born of the flesh, is* only *flesh; and* what proceeds and is produced from parents that are sinful and corrupt, is sinful and corrupt as they are [d]; but *that which is born of the Spirit is* formed to a resemblance of that blessed *Spirit* whose office it is to infuse a Divine life into the soul. 6

Wonder,

ver. 5, explains what was before undetermined as to the *original* of this *birth*. Dr. Owen with great propriety observes, "That if *regeneration* here mean only *reformation of life*, our *Lord*, instead of making any new discovery, has only thrown a great deal of obscurity on what was before plain and obvious, and known not only to the Jews but the wiser *heathens*. And indeed (says he immediately after) this is the main article in *dispute* between many. Some think all things in scripture are expressed in condescension to our capacities, so that there is still to be conceived in many of them an inexpressible grandeur; while, on the other hand, others suppose that, under the pomp and grandeur of the most hyperbolical expressions, things of a low and ordinary sense are to be understood." See *Dr. Owen on the Spirit*, p. 175.—For the full import of the *phrases* used in *this verse* see my *Sermons* on *Regeneration*, No. IV. and V.

[d] Is sinful and corrupt as they are,] The many passages in which *flesh* is put for a *corrupt degenerate nature*, enslaved to animal appetites and pursuits, seemed to me to justify this interpretation: and would to God fact and experience did not so plainly vindicate it! (Compare Gen. vi. 3. Rom. viii. 8. Gal. v. 17—24. and Jude ver. 23.) Indeed it seems to me impossible to clear up either the beauty of the antithesis, or even the truth of the assertion, on any other interpretation.

SECT. XXV.

John III. 7

Wonder not, therefore, *that I said unto thee*, and have declared it as a truth that you are all concerned in, That *you* yourselves, even though you are Jews and Pharisees and rulers of the people, yet *must be born again*; since the degeneracy of the human nature is of so universal an extent as to be common to you all. Nor have you any cause to be surprised if there be some things in this doctrine of regeneration which are of an obscure and unsearchable nature; for even in the natural world, many things are so:

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8 *The wind*, for instance, *bloweth where it will*, sometimes one way and sometimes another and is not subject to the direction or command of man; *and* though *thou hearest the sound thereof*, and feelest its sensible and powerful effects, *yet thou canst not* exactly *tell* from *whence it cometh, and whither it goeth*; for whatever general principles may be laid down concerning it, when you come to account for its particular variations, the greatest philosophers often find themselves at a loss; and in like manner *so* it *is* with *every one that is born of the Spirit:* and you are so far from being capable of accounting for it, that it is easy to be seen there is a sovereign freedom in that Divine agency, which makes it oftentimes impossible to say why it is imparted to one rather than to another; and there is a secret in the manner of its operation on the mind, which it is neither necessary to know nor possible to explain.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 But *Nicodemus*, who had been accustomed to the pomp and ceremony of an external religion, *answered and said unto him, How can these things be?* for, after all this explication, I am still at a loss to understand what this being born of the Spirit means, and therefore cannot conceive how it should be so absolutely necessary.

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

10 *Jesus* then *answered and said unto him*, How Nicodemus! *art thou a teacher of Israel*, of so distinguished a rank and character, *and dost thou not know these things!* [e] when so much is every where

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

[e] *Art thou a teacher of Israel, and dost thou not know these things?*] Could it be proved that the Jewish Rabbis, so early as Christ's time, called a *baptized person* one *born again*, or *born of water*, that would strongly illustrate the passage before us. But though Dr. Claget and Mr. Locke, and after them Dr. Clarke, give the words this turn, the fact did not appear to me so evident as to allow of my inserting it in the *paraphrase*. —However it is strange to me that any should doubt whether *proselytes* were admitted into the Jewish church by *baptism*, that is, by *washing*; when it is plain from express passages in the Jewish law, that no Jew who had lived like a *Gentile* for one single day could be restored to the communion of their church without it. Compare Numb. xix. 19, 20. and many other *precepts*

where said in the scripture of the purifying and quickening operations of the Divine Spirit on men's hearts? (Compare Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. and Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.) It is high time thou shouldest be better informed concerning them. SECT. XXV.

IMPROVEMENT.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear with attention what the blessed Redeemer said on this great occasion. It is surely a matter of universal concern: for who would not desire to *enter into the kingdom of God?* to be an acceptable member of *Christ's* church now, and an heir of glory beyond the grave?—But how is this blessing to be expected and secured? Thus saith the Lord himself, *Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*— Ver. 3
Let us remember therefore that it is not enough that a new name be given us, or that a new profession be assumed; it is not enough that we are descended from the most pious ancestors, that we have been externally devoted to God by the early seal of his covenant, or that we openly have made a solemn and express profession of our own faith and obedience, and have been *born of* baptismal *water* in our riper years! There must be a *new nature* implanted, a *new creation* formed in our souls by the almighty energy of the eternal *Spirit*, or it had been better for us that we had *never been born* at all.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and as we all proceed 6
from a corrupt original, we do not more evidently *bear the image of the earthly Adam* in the infirmities of a mortal body than in the degeneracy of a corrupt mind. Oh, let us earnestly entreat that, being born of the sanctifying influences *of the Spirit*, we may 8
bear the image of the heavenly! And to these influences let us with all humility and thankfulness be ready to yield up our souls, as remembering that they are of a free and sovereign nature, like *the wind* that *bloweth where it will*, and *does not stay for* the command of *the children of men.*

Let none of us indulge a vain and useless curiosity with respect 7, 8
to the *manner* of the *Spirit's operations*, or *wonder* that we meet with some things that are secret and unknown in matters of a spiritual nature, when we see daily there are so many things unknown in the common appearances of the natural world, and indeed so few that we can perfectly understand.

May the pride of a falsely pretended *reason* be subdued to the 10
authority of *faith!* And more especially, may such as are *teachers in*

precepts relating to *ceremonial pollutions;* by which the Jews were rendered incapable of appearing before God in the tabernacle or temple, till they were *washed* either by *bathing* or *sprinkling.*

SECT. XXV. *in Israël*, or who are designed for that important office, take their instructions with all humility from this *teacher* sent *from God!* For it must surely be not only *their calamity*, but that too of the *church* in general, if its guides continue ignorant of those sublime and spiritual truths which *Christ* came down from heaven to reveal, or are so biassed by the carnal reasonings of a depraved mind as to be indisposed and backward to receive them.

SECT. XXVI.

The latter part of our Lord's conference with Nicodemus, in which he opens the design of his coming into the world, and shews the absolute necessity of faith in him. John III. 11—21.

JOHN III. 11.

SECT. XXVI. JESUS, pursuing his discourse with Nicodemus, said, I find that you are stumbled at this doctrine of regeneration which I have now been
John III. 11 opening to you: but howsoever it may still appear to be obscure and strange, yet labour to subdue the prejudices that arise against it; for, *verily, verily, I say unto thee,* That in the doctrine we have now delivered *we speak* nothing but *what we* certainly *know*[a], *and testify* no other than *that which we have seen*[b], and can declare upon the surest grounds to be a most important truth, and to be perfectly agreeable to what we have received in commission from God himself; *and* yet the disposition of the Jewish rulers and people is generally such, that *ye receive not our testimony,* and are likely still to reject it: For these
12 things which I have already told you are but the

JOHN III. 11.

VERILY, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

12 If I have told you

a *We speak what we know.*] Some have supposed that, as Christ speaks here in the *plural number*, he may refer not only to the doctrine that was delivered by *himself*, but to the testimony that was given to the truth of it by *John the Baptist*, and to the preaching also of his own *disciples*, who all concurred in testifying the same things; the certainty of which they were assured of by the teachings of the *Spirit*, and by their own experience, while it was known to Christ by his omniscience, and by the intimate acquaintance that he had with all the councils of the Father.—And others have supposed that he includes here, with *himself* the *Father* and the *Spirit*, who are expressly spoken of in other passages as *bearing witness* to the truth of what he said, and as *agreeing* with him in the testimony that he gave. (Compare John viii. 18. xiv. 20—26. and 1 John v. 6—8.)—But there is no necessity we should suppose him to refer to any other than *himself*; since nothing is more useful than for a person of authority to speak of himself in the *plural number*, as Christ may be observed to have done elsewhere (Mark iv. 30.) and in the *next verse* he appears to have restrained it to *himself*, where he says only in the *singular number*, *If I have told you earthly things*, &c. See *Lightfoot's Harmony in loc.*

b *And testify that which we have seen.*] Christ seems here to allude to what was mentioned in the *law* as qualifying a man to be a *witness*, that he was able to declare of what he testified, that *he had seen or known it.* (Levit. v. 1.) And as he therefore had a clear perception, and a certain knowledge of the truth of what he said, there was the highest reason to receive his *testimony*, and to regard him as a *true and faithful witness.*

the first principles to make way for what is yet more marvellous. Now, *if I* hitherto *have told you* things which have been capable of being represented to you in a familiar way, and being illustrated by obvious and well-known similitudes; so that by reason of their plainness, and of the frequent references to them in the Old Testament, they may be called *earthly things; and ye believed not* even these: *how* then *would you believe if I* should yet go on to *tell you* other doctrines which are not capable of being thus explained; and which indeed are so much more mysterious and sublime that, in comparison of what has been already told you, they may be called *heavenly things*?[c] (Compare Heb. vi. 1, 2. Psal. ciii. 11. and Isa. lv. 9.) Yet even these you will have no just reason to suspect, when you consider whence they come, *and* who it is that reveals them to you: for *no one* ever *has ascended up to heaven* to search into the secret counsels and to obtain an intimate and perfect knowledge of the truths of God[d]; *unless*, as you will see hereafter, *he* has done it *who is* really *descended from heaven; [even] the Son of man who is in heaven*, as there is the place of his stated abode, whither he shortly will return, and as he now is present there by his Divine nature, which fills both heaven and earth.

SECT. XXVI.

John II. 12.

you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you *of* heavenly things?

13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.

13

And now I mention the Son of man, let me rectify that grand mistake of yours concerning his kingdom, which otherwise may be attended with such fatal consequences. You expect to see him raised on a magnificent throne, and not only

14 And as Moses lifted

14

[c] *Heavenly things.*] This has been understood by some, of the sublime and heavenly doctrines that were afterwards revealed,—of the *eternal generation of the Son*, and of the *fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily*,—and of those other *mysteries of godliness* that are above the reach of human reason, and cannot be illustrated by *earthly things*; (see Lightfoot's *Harmony in loc.*) Though it would rather seem that *our Lord* does more immediately refer to the doctrines which he mentions in the remaining part of his discourse to Nicodemus, —of his descent from heaven to instruct us in the things of God, and be united to the human nature here below, while by his divine nature he still continued to be present above,—of the design for which he came into the world to be lifted up upon the cross, that he might save us from our sins;—of everlasting life and happiness to be obtained by faith in his death;—and of the condemnation of all those that should reject him: which may be counted as *the deep things of God*, which he *reveals unto us by his Spirit*, and which *the natural man* who disregards that spirit, *receiveth not, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*; 1 Cor. ii. 10—14.

[d] *Ascended up to heaven* to search into—the truths of God.] The phrase of *ascending into heaven* is plainly used in this sense, Deut. xxx. 12. Rom. x. 6. and Prov. xxx. 4.—As for the turn here given to the *particle* ει μη, see the *note* on John xvii. 12. sect. clxxix.

SECT. XXVI.

only breaking off the yoke from the Jewish nation, but leading them on to conquer and destroy the Gentiles: but I must assure you that *as Moses lifted up the* brasen *serpent* on a pole *in the wilderness*, to heal those that were dying by the venom of the fiery serpents there (see Numb. xxi. 8, 9.) *so* also *must the Son of man be* first *lifted up* on a cross (compare John viii. 28. xii. 32, 34.) and then publicly exhibited in the preaching of the gospel, that sinners may by him receive a far more noble and important cure[e]:

John III. 14.

lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 Even *that whoever believeth on him may not perish*, as all in their natural state would otherwise do[f], *but may* obtain so perfect a recovery as cer-
16 tainly to *have eternal life*. *For* this is indeed the summary of that important message which I bring to the children of men, that *God so loved the world*[g], apostate and miserable as it was; yea, to such an amazing and unutterable degree did he love it *that he gave* even *his only-begotten Son* from his embraces, *that whoever believeth on him*, whatever be the nation he belongs to, or whatever his guilt be, he *may not perish* under the sentence of Divine justice, *but may have*
17 *everlasting life* and glory. *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world*, and to execute that vengeance upon them which their guilt might have taught them to fear; nor did he send him to destroy the Gentile nations, as your Jewish prejudices are ready to represent it; *but that the world* of mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles, *might be saved by him*, even all without exception who will listen to the overtures of his gospel. And therefore, on the one hand, *he that believeth on him*, how great soever

15 That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned:

[e] A far more noble and important cure.] The grand point of *similitude* here is in the *manner* of performing the *cure*, that is, by *believing regards* to something *lifted up* for that purpose by a *Divine appointment*. It would be blasphemy to run a *parallel* between Christ and that which gave us the deadly wound: and to talk, as Grotius and Dr. Clarke here do, of the resemblance between him and the image of the *serpent*, as he was *made in the likeness of sinful flesh*, seems in this connection to be foreign to the purpose.

[f] As all in their natural state would otherwise do.] This is strongly implied here, and yet more strongly in ver. 18, where all that *do not believe* are said to be *condemned already*: and till men enter deeply into this important truth, the gospel may indeed be their amusement, but I see not how it is like to be their joy or their cure.

[g] *God so loved the world.*] It is not only a very arbitrary criticism by which Erasmus makes these the words of the *evangelist* rather than of Christ, but if it were admitted, it would destroy much of the beauty and energy of that awful admonition which *our Lord* gives to Nicodemus, and by him to his brethren, in this his first entrance on his ministry. No doubt, many of them attended him to learn the result of *this conference*, which to the best of his understanding we may conclude he honestly reported: and it is sad to think what an aggravation it was of the unbelief and impenitence of that grand council who afterwards treated Christ with so much contempt and malignity.

demned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

ever his sins may have been, and however unpardonable according to the tenor of the Mosaic law, yet *shall not be* finally *condemned, but* shall obtain a complete pardon: and on the other hand, *he that believeth not*, whatever his external profession and privileges may be, *is condemned already*, remaining under the sentence of his former guilt, yea, and subjecting himself by his refusal of the only remedy to greater and more aggravated woe; *because he hath not believed in the* illustrious *name*[h] *of the only-begotten Son of God*, though expressly revealed to him on so glorious and important an occasion.

SECT. XXVI. John III. 18.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Now, through the great perverseness of mankind, I certainly foresee that this will be the case with multitudes: for *this is the* great *condemnation*, the crime that fills up the measure of men's iniquities and proves the surest cause of their final and speedy ruin, *that* a Divine *light is come into the world, and* yet *men have loved darkness rather than light*, and have chosen to remain ignorant rather than to submit themselves to the teachings of this heavenly revelation; and the reason is plainly this, *because their deeds were evil*, and they have not virtue enough to resolve on a thorough reformation. *For every one who* is conscious to himself that he *doeth evil*, and will persist in his wickedness, *hateth the light*, as the cause of anguish and shame to his guilty mind; *and* he *cometh not to the light, lest his actions should be reproved* by it, and so his character exposed and his conscience disquieted, (Compare Eph. v. 13) *But he that practises truth*[i] and virtue, sincerely endeavouring to adjust his actions according to the eternal law of righteousness, or the nature and obligation of things, *comes to the light* with confidence and pleasure, and takes all opportunities of improving his knowledge, *that his actions may be made manifest*

19

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

20

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.

21

[h] *Believed in the* illustrious *name.*] Though *the name* of a person be often put for *the person* himself, yet I think it is farther intimated in that expression, that the person spoken of is great and magnificent; and therefore it is generally used to express either *God the Father* or our *Lord Jesus Christ.*

[i] *He that practises truth*: ὁ ποιων την αληθειαν.] This phrase often occurs as the character of a *good man*: (compare Psal. cxix. 30. Isa. xxvi. 2. 1 Pet. i. 22. 1 John i. 6. and 2 John, ver. 4.) And it is used with great propriety, since there is as really a *truth* or *falsehood* in *actions* as in *words*: as Mr. Wollaston in particular has shewn at large; see *Relig. of Nature* chap. i.—Of the same kind is the phrase ποιειν ψευδος, used more than once by St. John, perhaps in a beautiful *opposition* to this before us; and should it be rendered *practiseth a lie*, that *opposition* would be more apparent; see Rev. xxi. 27. xxii. 15.

[k] *That*

SECT. XXVI.

fest as in open day; knowing it will appear *that they are wrought in God*[k], that is, that they are agreeable to the Divine nature and will, and the consequence of that union of soul with him, which is the highest dignity and happiness of a rational creature. Be it therefore known unto you all, that this gospel which I preach is the great touchstone of men's true characters; and, as nothing but a corruption of heart can oppose it, so I faithfully warn you that, if you reject it, it is at the peril of your souls.

John III. 21.

This was the purport of our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus; and it appears by some following circumstances of the story, that it made a deep and lasting impression on his mind. See John vii. 50. and xix. 39.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 13 How happy is it for us that, since *none* of the *children of men* ever *ascended up into heaven* to learn the mysteries of Divine knowledge there, *the only-begotten Son of God* has been pleased to 11 *come down from thence* that he might instruct us! He *spake what he knew, and testified what he had seen:* Oh that men were so wise as to *receive his testimony*, be the discoveries ever so new or the doctrines ever so sublime!

Let us with peculiar pleasure attend unto that *abstract of the gospel* which he exhibited in this profitable and comprehensive discourse with *Nicodemus*.—It presents to our view Christ, and *him crucified.* It opens the treasures of Divine beneficence and 16 compassion, and shews us the Father of mercies *so loving a world*, which he might justly have abhorred and destroyed, as to *give his only-begotten Son* to be a ransom for it.

14 Let us behold him *lifted up* on the cross as the great attractive to whom all were to be *drawn!* In him shall we find the *Divine cure* for our souls, infected as they are with the poison of sin, if we behold him not merely with a curious but a *believing* eye. Whatever our wounds be, if in the exercise of *faith* we look to him, we shall not die of them; but it is owing to our own obstinacy and impenitence if we yet *perish.*

He might justly have appeared in a different form for the *con-* 17 *demnation* of sinners, rather than their *salvation.* The *Son of God* might

k *That they are wrought in God:* εν Θεω ειργασμενα.] Grotius thinks that εν is here used for κατα, and that it only signifies *agreeable to the Divine nature:* this is certainly comprehended, but it is not all it expresses. His instance of the like use of the *particle* in 1 Cor. vii. 39. seems insufficient; for *to marry* εν τω Κυριω *in the Lord*, signifies there the *marrying* one who is *in Christ*, that is *a Christian.*

a *At*

might have *come into* an apostate *world* armed with thunderbolts of flaming vengeance to punish the violation of his Father's law; but his hands are filled with eternal blessings. SECT. XXVI. Ver.

As we love our own souls, let us apply to him in time for this 19
salvation. Let us dread the aggravated *condemnation* of those who, *when light is come into the world*, prefer *darkness* to it, and obstinately shut their eyes against it, though it be the dawnings of an eternal day.

May integrity and uprightness preserve us! (Psal. xxv. 21.) And, conscious of a real desire to govern ourselves according to 20, 21
the *light* we have, may we chearfully lay ourselves in the way of more; that in the last awful day, when the sentence of Divine wrath shall be executed on all the servants of sin, and their character shall stand disclosed in the most odious colours, ours may shine out beautiful and fair, and the good *deeds* that we have done, being now *wrought in God*, may then not only be accepted and applauded, but through the grace of the Redeemer abundantly rewarded by him!

SECT. XXVII.

John the Baptist's last testimony to Christ on occasion of a dispute concerning his baptism, and that administered by our Lord's disciples. John III. 22, *to the end.*

JOHN III. 22.

AFTER these things, came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

JOHN III. 22.

AFTER these things, Jesus and his disciples came from Jerusalem, where they had kept the passover together, *into* a part of *the land of Judea*, at some distance from the capital city; *and there he continued with them, and* by their ministry, though not in his own person, *baptized*. (See John iv. 2.) SECT. XXVII. John III. 22.

23 And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came and were baptized.

And John was also at that time *baptizing at* 23
Enon, which was a place *near Salim*, a town on the west side of Jordan: and he particularly chose that place *because there was a great quantity of water there*, which made it very convenient for his purpose: *and they came* from all parts,

a *At Enon,—because there was a great quantity of water there.*] It is exceeding difficult to determine the true situation of this place, about which *geographical writers* are not at all agreed. We may conclude however from ver. 26, that it was *on the west side of Jordan*, as Bethabara, where John had baptized before, was *on the other side*. But nothing surely can be more evident than that πολλα ὑδατα *many waters*, signifies *a large quantity of water*, it being sometimes used for the Euphrates, Jer. li. 13. *Septuag.* To which I suppose there may also be an allusion, Rev. xvii. 1. Compare Ezek. xliii. 2. and Rev. i. 15. xiv. 2. xix. 6. where *the voice of many waters* does plainly signify the roaring of a high sea.

SECT. xxvii.

parts, *and were baptized* by him. *For* the reader will observe that *John* the Baptist *was not yet thrown into prison*[b]; as he was a few months after, by the injustice of Herod, in whose territories that place lay.

John III. 24

24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

25 *And there was* about this time *a* warm *dispute between* [*some*] *of the disciples of John and a* [*certain*] *Jew*[c], who had been baptized by Christ, *about* this right of *purifying*, or baptism, which was administered in different parts by these two Divine teachers; for notwithstanding their commissions and administrations were so harmonious, yet some, through ignorance and weakness, were ready to oppose them to each other.

25 Then there arose a question between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

26 *And* such was the concern of John's disciples upon this occasion, that *they came to John, and said unto him, Rabbi*, we are solicitous for thy honour in the present conjuncture of affairs: for *he that was* lately *with thee on the other side Jordan*, and *to whom thou gavest* such an honourable *testimony* there, *behold, he* now *baptizeth, and* people from *all* parts, yea even such as have before received thy baptism, *come unto him;* which, as we fear, may cause thy baptism to be neglected and tend to the injury of thy character, since some are already making very invidious comparisons between him and thee.

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him.

27 But *John replied* to his disciples, with an humility and integrity agreeable to the rest of his character, *and said*, in order to convince them farther of the superior honours due to the blessed Jesus, Do not give way to such vain partiality and fondness for me: for *a man can* indeed *receive*, and therefore ought to assume *nothing* to himself, *unless it be given him from heaven;* but we are just what God is pleased to make us, and must stand in that rank which his infinite wisdom

27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

b *John was not yet thrown into prison.*] I think it probable from hence, as well as from *tradition*, and many other passages in *this gospel* itself, that St. John wrote it as a *supplement* to the rest. For he speaks of *the Baptist's imprisonment* as a thing generally known, and yet says nothing of his *martyrdom*, though he had given so large an account of his ministry. We cannot suppose he would have omitted so material a fact, had he not known that the other *evangelists* had recorded it at large; as will be seen in the *next section*, and in sect. lxxvii.

c *A certain Jew.*] The many *copies* which read it thus, as well as the authority of the *Syriac version*, and the citations of some of the *fathers*, determine me to prefer *this reading*, which I think gives rather an easier sense; as a single Jew might most properly be opposed to *John's disciples*, who were Jews themselves; and as a considerable part of the nation had entered themselves into that number, at least so far as *receiving his baptism* was a token of it.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

dom has seen fit to assign us. Nor have you any reason to be surprised at the report you bring me, or to imagine I shall regard it as a matter of complaint: for *you yourselves*, in what you now have said, *bear witness to me*[d], and cannot but remember, *that*, even from the very first of my appearance, *I* expressly *said* and was on all occasions ready to repeat it, *that I am not the Christ; but that I am sent* as a harbinger *before him;* and therefore am so far from being in any opposite and separate interest, that his success is my greatest joy. *It is the bridegroom* only *that hath the bride;* and it is his peculiar right to enjoy her as his own: *but* as for *the* intimate *friend of the bridegroom, who standeth* near him, *and heareth him* express his delight and complacency in her[e], he is so far from envying and repining at it, that, if he really deserves the name of a friend, he rather *rejoices with* exceeding *great joy on account of the bridegroom's voice.* Such *therefore* is the friendship and the high regard I have for Jesus, that *this* that you have told me is *my joy*: which is so far from being at all impaired, that it *is* heightened and *completed* on this happy occasion, which you should rather have been ready to congratulate than to have made it matter of complaint.

SECT. XXVII.

John III. 28.

29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

29

30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

I know that as to him *he* daily *must increase*, and, like the growing moon, appear continually more and more glorious; *but I must* gradually wane and *decline* till I entirely disappear from hence: (for the end of my ministry is now in a great measure answered, and therefore I quickly expect to be dismissed from it.) And it is fit it should be so: for *he that cometh from above*, as Jesus did, *is* far *above all* the children of men, and so undoubtedly is above me; while, on the other

30

31 He that cometh from above, is above all: he that is of the earth, is earthly, and speaketh

31

[d] *You yourselves bear witness to me:* αυτοι υμεις μοι μαρτυρειτε.] There seems to be an intimation in these words, that what they themselves had just been saying was a sufficient proof of what the Baptist was going to declare; for they had described Jesus by the character of *him to whom John had borne witness.*

[e] *Heareth him* express his delight and complacency in her.] Some have supposed that this alludes to a peculiar ceremony attending the *marriages* among the Jews; which the reader may find in *Dr. Hammond in loc.* and *Selden. Uxor. Heb.* lib. ii. cap. 16. But perhaps it may be a more general reference to any of the natural expressions of *joy* on such an occasion.—I pretend not to determine how far Bishop Patrick may be right, in supposing "that this is an allusion to the *cabalistic doctrine*, that Tipheret, the *Great Adam*, or the Messiah, is married to Malcuth, *the congregation of Israel*, as the terrestrial Adam was to Eve." See his *Preface to Canticles*, § 4.

[f] *He*

SECT. XXVII.

John III. 31.

other hand, *he that* originally *was of the earth*[f], being born like me in a natural way, *is* still *of the earth*, mean and imperfect, and can never hope, by any refinements and improvements, to equal what is heavenly and Divine; but what he says will correspond with his original, *and*, being earthly in his rise, he *speaketh of the earth*; the subjects of his discourse are comparatively low, or howsoever noble and sublime they be, there is a mixture of infirmity and weakness in his way of treating them: whereas *he who* originally *cometh from heaven*, and who has shewn so wonderful a condescension in his visiting this lower world, *is* still, in the midst of all his voluntary abasement, incomparably *above all* that dwell upon earth, not only in the dignity and glory of his person, but in the spiritual and heavenly nature of his doctrine. *And* I declare it to you with the greatest confidence, that *what he hath seen and heard*, or what he knows to the utmost degree of certainty, *that does he testify* and publish to the world; *and* I exceedingly lament it, that, notwithstanding all that eagerness of curiosity with which the multitudes are flocking now about him, yet *no man* cordially *receives his testimony*; and among all that hear him there are very few who are duly affected with what he delivers, and yield as they ought to its Divine evidence and importance. But *he who hath* indeed *received his testimony* acts a most wise and happy part and *hath*, as it were, *set his seal* [*to it*] *that God is true*; acknowledging his hand in these credentials given to his Son, and his veracity in sending him thus furnished to fulfil his ancient promises to his people. *For he whom God hath sent* into the world as the promised Messiah, *speaketh the words of God*, and all that he reveals should be regarded as Divine oracles: *for God giveth not the* powers and the inspiration of his *Spirit* [*to him*] *by measure*, under such limitations and with such interruptions as he gives it to his other messengers[g]; but it dwells in him by

speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven, is above all.

32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth: and no man receiveth his testimony.

33 He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal, that God is true.

34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him.*

[f] *He that was of the earth.*] To render ὁ ὢν ἐκ τῆς γῆς thus, prevents the appearance of a *tautology* in the following words, ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐστι, which would otherwise seem unavoidable.

Under such limitations and with such interruptions as he gives it to his other messengers.] With what limitations and interruptions the extraordinary *gifts of the Spirit* were given, even to the greatest of the children of men, we shall have repeated occasion to observe in the process of this work.

[h] This

SECT. XXVII.

by a constant presence, and operates by a perpetual energy. For *the* Almighty *Father loveth the Son* incomparably beyond the most faithful of his servants; *and hath* not only established him as the great Teacher of his church, but hath *given* the government of *all things into his hand*, that he may be regarded as the universal Lord.

John III. 35.

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

So that instead of repining at his growing glories, you should rather be solicitous to secure an interest in his favour: for this is the substance and this the end of my whole testimony [h], that *he who believeth on the Son, hath* a sure title to *eternal life*, and hath already the beginnings of it wrought in his soul; *but he that is disobedient to the Son* [i], and obstinately persists in his unbelief and impenitence, *shall not see* and enjoy that *life; but*, on the contrary, is so far from it, that *the wrath of God*, and the unpardoned aggravated guilt of all his sins, *abideth* even now *upon him*, and will quickly sink him into final condemnation and ruin.

36

36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Thus did that holy man John the Baptist conclude those testimonies to Christ which are recorded in the gospel, and was quickly after imprisoned by Herod the tetrarch; as the course of this history will presently shew.

IMPROVEMENT.

IT is indeed too true that *the spirit which* naturally *dwelleth in us* all *lusteth to envy* (Jam. iv. 5.) and it is far from being a low attainment in religion to look with complacency and thankfulness on the superior abilities and acceptance of others, especially of those who once appeared in an inferior rank. But for the cure of this unreasonable and restless passion, so contrary to the true spirit of the gospel, let us remember that *a man can receive nothing* at all *except it be given him from heaven.* It is God that makes one man to *differ* from another; and surely nothing can

Ver. 26

27

h This is the substance, and this the end of my whole testimony.] Erasmus here destroys (as he had done before at ver. 16.) the beauty of this discourse by supposing that the latter part of it is to be considered as the reflection and attestation of *the evangelist*, upon occasion of the testimony that was given by *the Baptist*; though he seems himself at a loss to fix the clause at which this supposed *change* of the *person speaking* begins.

i *He that is disobedient to the Son.*] I think it is of great importance to preserve a difference in the *translation*, correspondent to that in the *original*, between ο πιστευων εις τον υιον, and ο απειθων τω υιω; because the *latter phrase* explains the *former*, and shews that the *faith* to which the promise of *life* is annexed is an effectual principle of sincere and unreserved *obedience*; and it is impossible to make one part of *scripture* consistent with another, unless this be taken into our idea of *saving faith*; as I have shewn at large in the *first* of my *Sermons on Salvation by Grace through Faith.*

SECT. XXVII. can be more unreasonable than that, when we ourselves have received all from his bounty, *our eye should be evil because he is good.* (Mat. xx. 15.)

Ver. 29 If we are indeed the *friends of Christ*, we shall *rejoice* to see his interest advance, and especially to see souls espoused to him as the great *Bridegroom* of the church, whoever are the instruments of promoting so happy a work. *Would to God that* in this sense *all the Lord's people were* even as the greatest of the *prophets*, or as the very chief of the *apostles!* (Numb. xi. 29.)

30 But if indeed they were so, yet, like those brightest luminaries of the church, they must in time have their *change* and their *wane*. If God does not darken their glories by a sudden *eclipse*, yet they who are now, like *the Baptist*, *burning and shining lights*, *must* like him gradually *decrease*, while others are *increasing* about them; as they, in their turns, grew up amidst the decays of the former generation. Let us know how to *set* as well as to *rise*; and let it comfort our declining days to trace in those that are like to succeed us in our work the openings of yet greater usefulness. So shall we grow in our meetness for that world where all *the righteous shall shine forth* together, *as the sun*, *in the kingdom of their Father*, in a bright resemblance of him *with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning*.

33 As the surest means of guiding us to that happy world, let us make it our great care, *by receiving the testimony of Christ*, to *set* our *seal to the truth of God*, engaged in his cause.—With how much pleasure should we do it, and with what joy should we re-

34, 35 flect that *the Father* so *loveth the Son* that he has not only *given him* the rich and unmeasureable communications of the *Spirit*, but *has committed* also *into his hand* the reins of *government!* Let his faithful servants remember it with joy, and cheerfully commit their concerns to him *who is made head over all things for* the benefit of *his church*, (Eph. i. 22.)

And to conclude; let it engage us to see the sincerity of our *faith* in him and *subjection* to him; since it is not a light matter, but *our life*, even the very *life of our souls*. May God awaken those on whom his *wrath* now *abideth* to a sense of their danger; and may he strengthen in each of our souls that *faith* which is the pledge of a happy immortality!

SECT. XXVIII.

John the Baptist is imprisoned by Herod. Luke III. 19—20. Mark VI. 17—20. Mat. XIV. 3—5.

LUKE III. 19.

SECT. XXVIII. THUS John went on to prosecute the great design of his appearance, and to prepare the way

Luke III. 19. BUT Herod the tetrarch being reproved

proved by him, for Herodias' [sake] his brother Philip's wife; [MARK, for he had married her] and for all the evils which Herod had done. [MAT. XIV. 3. MARK VI. 17.]

way for the reception of Jesus: *but* much about this time it pleased God to permit the course of his ministry to be interrupted, and his life itself to be quickly after brought to its period. For *Herod* Antipas, *the tetrarch* of Galilee, having out of curiosity sent for him to his court, this holy man thought it his duty to admonish him in regard to the public scandals of his life and reign. Now Herod *being* thus plainly and faithfully *reproved by him*, both *on account of Herodias his brother Philip's wife*, *(for*, to the infamy and scandal of his character, *he had* ungenerously taken her from her husband, and publicly *married her*[a] in contempt of all laws human and divine,[b] *and* also *for all the* other *evils that Herod had done*, which were many and great, that haughty prince was so exasperated, that, instead of falling under the admonition, he meditated revenge: And though for the present he dismissed him[c] it was not long before he prosecuted his design, and *added yet this* act of wickedness *to all* [*the rest*] of his enormous crimes, *that he* confined and *shut up John in prison*. *For Herod himself*[d] *sent* officers after him, *and seized John*, who had returned to prosecute his ministry in a place which lay within the territories of Galilee; *and* having thus got him into his power, he *bound him* with chains[e], *and*

SECT. XXVIII.

Luke III. 19.

20. Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

20

MARK VI. 17 For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him [and put *him*] in prison.

Mark VI. 17.

[a] *On account of Herodias.—for he had married her.*] Josephus gives us an account of this *incestous marriage*, which proved the occasion of *the Baptist's imprisonment* and *death*, (*Antiq.* lib. xviii. cap. 5. (al. 7.) § 1, 4, *Havercamp.*) from whence it appears that this Herodias was daughter to Aristobulus, one of the sons of Herod the Great, and consequently was niece both to Philip her former husband, and to Herod Antipas the tetrarch, her latter. By Philip, whom Josephus also calls Herod (as princes had often several names) she had one daughter whose name was Salome, (*ibid.* p. 885.) who probably was the young lady afterwards mentioned, sect. lxxvii. as instructed by her mother to ask the head of John the Baptist. And that historian informs us that Herod the tetrarch, to make way for his marriage, with Herodias, divorced his former wife, the daughter of Aretas; which made this commerce a kind of *double adultery*, and was the occasion of a war between those two princes in which Herod's forces were defeated.

[b] In contempt of all laws human and Divine.] The only case in which *the law* allowed of *marrying* one who had been a *brother's wife* was, when the brother *died childless*, (Lev. xviii. 16. xx. 21. and Deut. xxv. 5,) whereas in this instance Philip was yet *living* and had a *daughter* by Herodias. It was also in violation of all the rites of *hospitality* that Herod, while a guest in his brother's house, seduced his wife; as Josephus expressly observes, *Antiq.* lib. xviii. cap. 5. § 1. p. 883.

[c] Though for the present he dismissed him.] Else there would have been no need for his *sending to seize him*, as we are presently told he did.

[d] *Herod himself.*] There seems to be a peculiar *emphasis* in this expression, which probably may be designed to intimate that *his seizing John* was not merely the effect of Herodias's solicitations, but of his own resentment.—The *place* where he *seized him* might probably be Enon, where John had lately baptized, and where he again might return to his work: and if so, Enon must have been in Herod's jurisdiction. Compare *note* a on John iii. 23. p. 151.

[e] *Bound him* with chains.] It is plain from Matthew's manner of expressing this,

SECT. XXVIII.

and put him in prison; though his confinement there was not so close but that his disciples were sometimes suffered to converse with him; (compare Mat. xi. 2, 4. and Luke vii. 19, 20. sect. lvii.

Mark VI. 17.

prison. [MAT. XIV. 3.]

18 And though he might assign other political reasons to excuse his conduct, as if his growing popularity rendered him dangerous to the state[f], yet the true reason *for* which he did it was this, that *John* had treated him with such a freedom as he knew not how to bear, and *had told Herod* to his very face, *It is not lawful for thee* that thou shouldest take upon thee as thou doest *to have thy brother's wife*, nor canst thou ever have any solid peace of conscience while 19 thou continuest to retain her. *And* for this cause *Herodias* also was yet more furiously incensed against him, and with an unrelenting cruelty still *hung upon him*[g]; *and* not contented with what he suffered in his imprisonment, *would* fain *have put him to death, but she could* 20 *not* immediately compass that design: *For Herod*, notwithstanding all his resentment, still *reverenced John*[h] in his heart; *knowing that he was a righteous and holy man*, of which the fidelity of his reproofs was a very convincing evidence. *And* therefore calling him to frequent audiences, *he heard him* discourse *with attention*[i] *and pleasure*; *and* was so far influenced by it that he *did many things* according to his exhortations[k].

18. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. [MAT. XIV. 4.]

19. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him, but she could not.

20. For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

But

that he bound him, and put him in prison, that *chains* were added to his confinement, as usual in such cases; (compare Acts xii. 6, and xxviii. 20.) so that those *versions* which consider εθηκεν as an *expletive*, lose part of the sense.

[f] Dangerous to the state.] Josephus expressly says that Herod was afraid the authority of so great a man should occasion a revolt among his subjects; and that he thought it better to take him off, than to venture the danger of such a revolution as he might have occasioned; *Antiq.* lib. xviii. cap. 5. § 2. p. 884. He there adds that he first confined him in the castle of Machæris.

[g] *Herodias hung upon him.*] This seems to me the import of the phrase ενειχεν αυτω, which is with peculiar propriety applied to a dog's fastening his teeth into his prey, and holding it down. See *De Dieu in loc.* and compare Luke xi. 53.—There seems an opposition seldom remarked between *this* and ver. 17. Herod *himself* seized him, but Herodias went still further.—Josephus gives a very bad character of this Herodias, and assures us that her ambitious and envious spirit was at last the cause of Herod's ruin and her own. *Antiq.* lib. xviii. cap. 7. (al. 9.)

[h] *Reverenced John*, εφοβειτο.] The same word is justly so translated, Eph. v. 33. and there are many other passages where it has the same sense. See Luke xii. 5, and Rev. xi. 18. xiv. 7.

[i] *Heard him with attention.*] So I chuse to render συνετηρει αυτον, rather than *preserved*, or *protected him*, (compare Luke ii. 19. Gr.) though I know that the word sometimes signifies *to preserve*. (Mat. ix. 17.) Our English version of this passage appears to be improper; and I hope the little *transposition* I have made here will be forgiven, since it makes not the least alteration in the sense, and suits best with the genius of our language. Such little liberties elsewhere seem not so considerable as to need a more particular apology.

[k] *Did many things.*] Grotius would have it

MATT XIV. 5. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

But as John was still pressing him to dismiss Herodias, and telling him the insufficiency of any other reformation while he continued his infamous commerce with her; *and* she in the mean time wearied Herod with her importunity; *when* he at length was so far wrought upon that *he would* gladly *have* consented to *put him to death*, he was so apprehensive of the consequences of it that he durst not do it, since *he feared the multitude; because* he knew that *they* respected John, and *looked upon him as a prophet*[1], and he did not think it safe to provoke such a factious people by an action so extremely unpopular. SECT. XXVIII. Mat. XIV. 5.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT dangerous things are grandeur and power, if Divine grace does not secure the hearts of those who possess them! How unhappy are they whose fatal prerogative it is to be able to oppress with impunity, and to render it hazardous even to *reprove* them! Luke III. 19, 20.

John well deserved the veneration and esteem of *Herod* when he thus took the freedom to perform this dangerous office of friendship, and to manifest a fidelity so seldom to be found in courts, and indeed so often wanting elsewhere. A wise prince would have courted his friendship, and sought his advice; but he is at length rewarded with *imprisonment* and *death*. Mark VI. 18.

This good man was taken from his work, and *laid aside* in the midst of his days and his usefulness; but he calmly acquiesced in the disposals of Providence, and no doubt carried along with him to his *prison* incomparably more happiness than his persecutors could find on the *throne*. Mark VI. 17.

In this confinement the *prophet* was not *forgotten;* but as if *Herod* had studied to increase his own torment, he must be sent for again and again to discourse before him. That he *reverenced* a man of such approved integrity, none can wonder: but while he would not be entirely reformed by his remonstrances, that he should *hear him with pleasure*, and *do many things*, is very surprising. Delusive pleasure! unprofitable reformation! while, whatsoever instances he gave of his regarding him, *Herodias* was yet retained. May divine grace preserve us from such fatal parti- 20

it rendered, that *he had heard him formerly with pleasure, and had done many things;* supposing this refers to what had passed before his imprisonment: but such a change doth not appear necessary, as the *paraphrase* plainly shews.

1 *Looked upon him as a prophet.*] Accordingly Josephus says (in the place quoted above in *note* f) that the Jews in general looked on the succeeding calamities of Herod's reign as a *judgment* from God for his injustice to this holy man. a *More*

SECT. XXVIII. partiality! since, did we *keep the whole law, and offend* allowedly but *in one point*, we should become *guilty of all*; Jam. ii. 10.

We cannot wonder if a reformation thus insincere and partial was but short lived, and was followed at length by a grosser apostacy. *More bitter than death is the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands bands*; (Eccles. vii. 26.) To what may not the artifices of such an abandoned creature work up the wretch that is entangled with her charms! Such was the influence of *Herodias* over him, that at her instigation, *Herod* is prevailed upon to seek the *death* of that *righteous and holy man*, whose virtues he revered, and whose preaching he had attended with pleasure.

Mat. XIV. 5. But the *fear of the people* restrained him, though he was destitute of the *fear of God*, and had not any generous regard to men. Thus does God govern the world, and thus does he protect his church, by often making it the interest even of the worst of men to forbear those injuries and cruelties which the malignity of their natures might otherwise dictate. Let us courageously *commit the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing*, as firmly believing, that, whatever hazards we may be exposed to, *the wrath of man shall* on the whole be found to *praise him*, and *the remainder of* that *wrath shall he restrain!* Psal. lxxvi. 10.

SECT. XXIX.

Christ going from Judea to Galilee meets with a woman of Samaria, and enters into a conference with her, in which he discovers himself to her as the Messiah. John IV. 1—26.

JOHN IV. 1.

SECT. XXIX. THE testimony which the Baptist had given to Christ, together with the miracles he himself had wrought at Jerusalem during the John IV. 1. passover (see John ii. 23. and iii. 2.) impressed the minds of the people to such a degree, that, during his long abode in those parts, vast numbers were continually flocking around him; which gave great umbrage to the Jewish rulers. *When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees*, whose interest in the sanhedrim was so considerable, *had heard* with great concern what began to be so much talked of abroad, *that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John* the Baptist himself had done[a]; *(Though* indeed *Jesus himself*, for

JOHN IV. 1.

WHEN therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

2 (Though Jesus him-

[a] *More disciples than John* the Baptist himself had done.] I am not certain whether this happened *before John's imprisonment* or *after*; but if I had been sure it hap-

himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

for wise reasons, *did not* chuse to *baptize* any with his own hands[b], *but* left some of *his disciples* to do it in the name of a Messiah shortly to be manifested;) In order to avoid both their envy and their curiosity, *he left Judea*, after having continued there about eight months[c] *and departed again into Galilee*, his former abode, where the influence and power of the council were not so great.

SECT. XXIX.

John IV. 3.

3 He left Judea and departed again into Galilee.

4 And he must needs go through Samaria.

Now, unless he would have taken such a circuit through Judea and the neighbouring parts as in his present circumstances was very inconvenient, *he was obliged to go through* the country of *Samaria*. *He cometh therefore*, in his way, *to a city of Samaria*, originally *called* Sichem, but now, especially by the Jews, *Sichar;* which name they used as a term of reproach[d], intimating thereby that it was the seat of drunkards (see Isa. xxviii. 1.) and it was *near that piece of ground which Jacob* (having purchased it of the children of Hamor, Gen. xxxiii. 19.) by a particular grant *gave to Joseph his* beloved *Son;* (compare Gen. xlviii. 22. and Josh. xxiv. 32.) *And there was* a well belonging to it, called *Jacob's well;* it having been used by him and his family while they dwelt in these parts; (see Gen. xxxiii. 18. xxxv. 4.) *Now Jesus, being wearied with his journey, sate down immediately*

4

5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

5

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well; *and* it was about the sixth hour.

6

happened *before*, I should still have thought it proper to add the account of *that event* (as I have done in the preceding *section*) immediately after his last testimony, though some other facts might possibly intervene: but if (which seems most probable) Mat. iv. 12. and Mark i. 14. (sect. xxxi. *init.*) refer to *this journey*, they both in plain words assert it was *after John's imprisonment*.—I cannot forbear saying it is astonishing that a person of Mr. Whiston's learning and sagacity should place all these events *before the baptism* and *temptation of Christ*. Were his arguments to confirm his *eighth proposition* far more specious than they are, they would never solve or balance the flagrant absurdity of making John declare (John i. 32, 34) that *he saw the Spirit descending on Christ* above a year before it did so descend; yet this ingenious writer has forgotten himself so far as to represent the matter in this contradictory view; (see *Whiston's Harmony*, p. 135—139, and p. 227 compared with p. 242.) The interpretation given above of Mat. iii. 14. and Luke iii. 21. (p. 108, 109.) may solve some of the chief arguments on which he builds this singular *hypothesis*.

[b] *Jesus himself did not* chuse to *baptize* any with his own hands.] This might be partly to avoid importunate inquiries whether he was the Messiah, and partly to prevent those prejudices which might have arisen against the more perfect form of *baptism* afterwards instituted, if any had received this less perfect *baptism* from *Christ himself*.

[c] After having continued there about eight months.] This appears from ver. 35, for *harvest* began quickly after the *passover;* Lev. xxiii. 10, 15. Christ therefore staid in Judea from *one passover* till within four months of the *other;* that is near *eight months;* so that this journey into Galilee must be made near the middle of *winter*, probably about the beginning of our *December*. See *Sir Isaac Newton on Prophecy*, p. 147, 148.

[d] A term of reproach.] It is remarkable as Mr. L'Enfant observes, that *Sichar* in the Syriac language signifies *a drunkard* and *a liar*.

[e] *Sute*

SECT. xxix.

ately[e] *by* the side of *the well; [and] it was* then *about the sixth hour,* or just high noon; so that the heat joined with the fatigue of the journey to increase both his thirst and faintness[f].

John IV. 6.

7 And at this very juncture of time *there comes a* certain *woman of Samaria to draw water:* and *Jesus* (on purpose to introduce a discourse by which he graciously intended her conversion and salvation) *says unto her,* I desire you would 8 *give me [some water] to drink. For his disciples were* not near to assist him, but were *gone to the* neighbouring *city to buy food.*

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water; Jesus saith unto her, Give me drink.

8 For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat.

9 *Then says the woman of Samaria to him, How is it that thou who art,* as appears by thy habit and dialect, *a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria? for* the reader must observe that *the Jews have no friendly intercourse with the Samaritans*[g], nor so much as care to receive any favour from them, looking upon them as an impure and accursed nation.

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it, that thou being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 *Jesus,* to convince her that he was not under the power of such common prejudices, and to awaken her farther inquiries, *answered and said unto her, If thou hadst known the* great *gift of God* which he is now bestowing upon the children of men by his Son, *and who it is that says unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest* not only have complied with his request, but wouldst ere this time *surely have asked him*[h], *and he,* without ob-

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

e *Sate down immediately.*] Ἐκαθέζετο οὕτως, that is, *weary as he was,* says Dr. Whitby. I think Mr. Blackwall has not sufficiently proved that οὕτως sometimes signifies *therefore,* or *for this cause,* though he has attempted it in his *Sacred Classics,* Vol. I. p. 143, 144. The *particle* seems to have much the sense I have here given it, Acts xx. 11, and may often be rendered *accordingly, upon that,* or *after which;* see Acts vii. 8. xvii. 33, xxvii. 44. and John viii. 59. Compare *Elsner Observ.* Vol. I. p. 303.

f The heat joined with the fatigue, &c.] It is well known that in the latitude in which Jerusalem lies, the weather sometimes in December is exceeding hot at noon, even on days when the cold has been very severe in the morning.

g *The Jews have no friendly intercourse with the Samaritans.*] This must be the import of συγχρῶνται here; for it is evident from ver. 8. that the Jews *had some dealings* with them. It has been frequently observed that many causes concurred to occasion this inveterate hatred of the Jews the Samaritans such as—not only their foreign extract, and the early mixture of superstition and idolatry in their religion (2 Kings xvii. 24—33—41), but also the injurious manner in which they treated the Jews after their return from the captivity (Ezra iv. 1—6. Neh. vi. 1—14)—and especially their building a *temple* on mount Gerizim, which they made the centre of their worship in opposition to that at Jerusalem; *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xi. cap. 8.—And perhaps nothing contributed more to expose them to the contempt and abhorrence of the Jews than that infamous offer they made to Antiochus of dedicating that temple to Jupiter, and admitting the rites of his idolatrous worship, at a time when the Jews were suffering the utmost extremities in defence of their religion; see *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xii. cap. 5. (al. 7.) § 5. *Havercamp.*—The reader may find several passages in *Whitby* and *Lightfoot's Hor. Heb. in loc.* that express the mutual aversion of the two nations to each other.

h *Thou wouldst surely have asked him.*] This seems exactly to express the force of the phrase, σὺ ἂν ᾔτησας αὐτόν. i *He*

SECT. XXIX.

John IV. 10.

objecting to thee on account of the people to whom thou belongest, *would* readily *have given thee living water*[i], far better than what thou art now drawing. By which our Lord intimated his ability and readiness to communicate those influences of God's Holy Spirit which afford the noblest refreshment to the soul, and therefore are often described by water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

But *the woman*, who understood him only in a common sense, of fresh spring water, *says to him* with greater respect than before (as being struck both with the piety and kindness of his former reply), *Sir, thou hast no bucket*[k], nor any thing else to draw with, *and the well* before thee, which is the only spring hereabouts, *is very deep; whence hast thou then this living water* of which thou speakest? or what is the extraordinary supply which thou declarest may be had from thee? 11

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

Art thou greater and wiser *than our father Jacob who gave us this well*, leaving it to his descendants as a legacy of importance; *and* while he lived, he *drank of it himself, with his children and his cattle*, as the best water in these parts? 12

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whoever drinketh of this water, how much soever it may be esteemed, though it refresh the body for a little while, *will* quickly *thirst again:* 13

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him

But he that drinketh of the water which I shall give him, will find it so reviving to the soul that he *will never thirst*[l], or be in danger any more of perishing for want; *but the water which I shall give* 14

[i] *He would have given thee living water.*] It is certain that the phrase, *living water*, does in many good authors signify *spring water*, or *running water*, in opposition to that which stagnates and so quickly grows not only *flat*, or, as we commonly express it, *dead*, but at length *corrupt*; (see *Elsn. in loc.* and compare Gen. xxvi. 19. Lev. xiv. 5. Jer. ii. 13.) Yet, as *our Lord* elsewhere in a remarkable passage recorded by this *evangelist* (John vi. 51.) calls himself *Living Bread*, because by feeding upon him *life* is to be obtained, it seemed convenient literally to adhere to the *original* in this *version*; though I own it is very probable that woman understood *our Lord* of some fine *spring water* which flowed so easily as not to need the pains of *drawing*, and was, on this account at least, preferable to that of Jacob's well. And *our Lord's* reply, ver. 13, 14. shews that the *simile* would hold in that respect.

[k] *Thou hast no bucket.*] This, as it is the most material instrument for *drawing water*, answers the Greek αντλημα better than any single English word I recollect. And we find afterwards, upon the *woman's* returning in haste to the city, that she left *her water-pot* or *pail* behind her, ver. 28, which was the vessel she had brought to draw with. —Mr. Maundrell tells us that the *well* now shewn as Jacob's is *thirty-five yards* deep: *Maund. Journey to Jerus.* p. 63.

[l] *Will never thirst.*] Some would render ου μη διψηση εις τον αιωνα, *shall not thirst for ever*: but not to urge how much this spoils the *antithesis*, the expression used John vi. 35. ου μη διψηση πωποτε, is not liable to any such ambiguity. The force and truth of *our Lord's* assertion seems to lie in this, that the most impatient and restless desires of the soul being satisfied, when it is fixed on God as its supreme happiness, other *thirst* was not worth being mentioned; see John viii. 51, 52. sect. 105. John xi. 26. sect. 140. with the *notes* on those places; and John xiii. 10. sect. clxix.

SECT. XXIX.

John IV. 14.

give him will be a never failing source for his supply and *will be in him* as *a fountain of water* that will continually be *springing up* and flowing on *to everlasting life:* for that which I shall communicate to him will bring him to everlasting composure and satisfaction of mind now, and will be the earnest and principle of eternal happiness.

him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 *The woman,* still ignorant of his spiritual meaning, and understanding him only of natural water, *says unto him, Sir,* I claim thy promise, and desire thou wouldest *give me this* extraordinary *water, that I may not thirst* any more, *nor* have the trouble to *come hither* daily *to draw* it, as I now do.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16 *Jesus* perceiving her ignorance, and willing to discover himself to her in a manner that might more immediately touch her conscience, *says unto her, Go* home, and *call thy husband* to me, *and* then *come hither* again.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 *The woman,* sensible of the way in which she lived, and thinking to conceal her shame, *answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus says to her, Thou hast* answered *well,* in that thou hast *said, I have no husband: For* I know that *thou hast had five husbands, and* that *he whom thou hast now* with thee, as thou hast never been lawfully married to him, *is not thy husband*[m]: in *this* respect *thou hast spoken truly* and properly.

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband; Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18 For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

19 *The woman,* surprised at such an extraordinary instance of his knowledge, (yet desirous at the same time to turn off the discourse from a subject so much to her confusion,) *says to him, Sir, I perceive,* by thy discovering the circumstances of my life so truly, though I am a perfect stranger to thee, *that thou art a prophet;* and therefore I would gladly take this opportunity of being informed concerning that great question which divides the Jewish and Samaritan nations[n].

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

It

[m] *Is not thy husband.*] This can imply no less than that she was *not married* to the man she lived with now at all; for Christ seems to allow the other *five* to have been *husbands,* though her separation from some of the former, and her marriage with the rest, had been unlawful; which quite overthrows that argument which Jerom would draw from hence against the lawfulness of *marrying more than once.* See *Heinsius in loc.*

[n] That great question which divides the Jewish and Samaritan nations.] It is well known, and necessary to be recollected here, that Sanballat, by the permission of Alexander the Great, had built a *temple* upon mount Gerizim for Manasseh his son-in-law, who, for marrying Sanballat's daughter, was expelled from the *priesthood,* and from Jerusalem; (see Neh. xiii. 28. and *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xi. cap. 8.) This was the place where the Samaritans used to worship in opposition to Jerusalem; and it was so near Sichem, the scene of this story

SECT. XXIX.

John IV. 20

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

It is well known from the Mosaic writings that *our fathers worshipped on this mountain*°, which we think a circumstance of considerable weight in our favour; *whereas you* Jews *say that* the temple *at Jerusalem is the* great *place where we* should all present our sacrifices unto God, and *ought to* attend upon the duties of his *worship*, and whither all the tribes are to resort three times a year. I would beg therefore to be informed by thee in this important case, which of the two I should believe, and which is really the place most acceptable unto God.

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

In answer to this case of conscience, *Jesus says* 21
to her, Woman, believe me, and attend to what I say, *The hour is* now *coming, when* this controversy shall be entirely over, and *neither on this mountain, nor at Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father* in the same manner as you now do; for God is going now to introduce such a pure and spiritual dispensation as will remove all manner of distinctions as to the place in which he would be worshipped, and supersede the ceremonies

22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews.

practised here or there. But as to this dispute 22
which has so long been carried on between the Jews and you, it is apparent, on the principles of the Mosaic religion, that you Samaritans are in a gross mistake; and with respect not only to the place, but in a great measure to the object also, and the manner of your services, *you worship you know not what:* whereas *we* Jews are much better instructed in these things, and *know* whom, and on *what* authority, *we worship; for* truly the *salvation* God has promised to his people *is* to arise *from the Jews*, and the way of obtaining it is with the greatest advantage to be learnt among

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and

them. *Nevertheless*, as I said before, I assure 23
you again, *the hour approaches, and now is* just arrived, *when the true* and acceptable *worshippers shall worship the* great *Father* of all, not with these external rites on which you lay so much stress,

story, that a man's voice might be heard from the one to the other; Judg. ix. 7.

° *Our fathers worshipped on this mountain.*] As the Samaritans pretended to deduce their genealogy from Jacob, so it is evident that this refers to Abraham and to Jacob, who *erected altars* in this place, (Gen. xii. 6, 7. and xxxiii. 18, 20.) and possibly to the *whole congregation*, who were directed, when they came into the land of Canaan, to *put the blessing upon mount Gerizim*, Deut. xi. 29. And though Hyrcanus the son of Simon, who succeeded his father as high priest and prince of the Jews, had long ago destroyed the *temple* which Sanballat built here, (*Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xiii. cap. 9. [al. 17] § 1.) yet it is plain that the Samaritans still resorted thither, having, no doubt, rebuilt it, though probably in a meaner manner.

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stress, but *in spirit and in truth* [p], or in a more devotional and rational manner, to which these corporeal and typical ordinances must soon give way; *for the Father seeketh such to worship him,* as that kind of homage is most suited to his own nature, as well as peculiarly delightful and useful to the pious mind. For *God is* himself *a* pure *Spirit; and* therefore *they that worship him, ought to worship* him *in spirit and in truth:* and as some degree of spirituality and sincerity is necessary under every dispensation, you need not wonder, if at length he set aside those external rites, which were never principally regarded by him.

and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

John IV. 23.

24 God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

24

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

25 *The woman saith unto him, I know that the Messiah, who is called Christ, is coming,* and will soon appear; [*and*] *when he is* actually *come, he will* undoubtedly *teach us all* these sublime truths at which you have been hinting, and whatever other *things* it is necessary for us to know [q].

26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee, am *he*.

26 Upon her mentioning this, as *Jesus* was not apprehensive of those inconveniencies here which might have attended such an open acknowledgment among the Jews [r], he plainly and directly *tells her* in so many words, *I that am* now *speaking to thee, am he:* a declaration which, no doubt, she heard with great amazement; but before she could answer him, the disciples appeared, which for the present put an end to the conference.

IMPROVE-

[p] *Worship the Father in spirit and in truth.*] *Truth* is elsewhere opposed to types and ceremonies, John i. 14, 17. Heb. viii. 2. ix. 24. This important sentiment, as likewise what is said in ver. 24, is well illustrated by many fine *quotations* from ancient writers by *Grotius in loc.* And all that know any thing of that learned *commentator,* know that he has a thousand rich collections of this kind which do a great honour to *scripture* by illustrating its superior beauties; but it would be quite foreign to the design of this work either to transcribe such collections, or to attempt any supplement to them.

[q] *Teach us all things* it is necessary for us to know.] This (as well as ver. 29, 42) plainly proves both that the Samaritans expected the Messiah, and that they concluded he would be a *prophet.*

[r] Not apprehensive of those inconveniencies here which might have attended such an open acknowledgment among the Jews.] That Christ was very cautious of acknowledging himself to be the promised Messiah, in his conversing with the Jews, is very apparent (compare Mat. xvi. 20. Mark viii. 29, 30 Luke xxii. 67. and John x. 24.) and the reason was, that the Jews had such notions of the *temporal kingdom* of the Messiah, that they would have construed an open declaration of himself under that character as a claim to the *throne of David;* in consequence of which many would have taken up arms in the cause (John vi. 15), and others would have accused him to the Roman governor as a rebel against Cæsar (Luke xx. 20), as they afterwards did, Luke xxiii. 2.—This Mr. Locke has stated at large in his *Reasonableness of Christianity,* p. 59—77. Yet I think there was a nicety in Christ's conduct beyond what is there represented: for *our Lord* in effect declared the *thing* while he declined that particular *title;* and in a multitude of places represents himself as the *Son of man,* and the *Son of God,* which were both equivalent phrases, and generally understood

IMPROVEMENT.

CONDESCENDING and compassionate *Redeemer!* who would thus graciously converse with a *Samaritan*, with a woman of an infamous reputation too, from whom, on various accounts, a haughty *Pharisee* would have turned away in proud disdain! and could forget his *thirst*, pressing as that appetite is, that he might instruct and lead her to the *waters of life!* SECT. XXIX. Ver. 6, 9

Gracious *gift of God* to the children of men! how noble and how lasting a delight does it administer! Let it be our language, *Lord, evermore give us this living water!* Oh, pour out this enlivening *spirit* on us, which alone can allay the *thirst* of our souls, and give us that lasting satisfaction which we in vain would seek from these *broken cisterns*, from these precarious streams; till at length the *fountain springs up* in Paradise, and flows on to *life everlasting!* 10 15 13 14

May this good *spirit* anticipate those immortal delights to our souls by leading us into that *spirituality of worship* which the nature of God demands, and which the gospel dispensation is so eminently calculated to promote! Let it be inscribed on our hearts that *God is a Spirit;* and let it teach us *to worship him in spirit and in truth. Such worshippers the Father seeks;* such may he ever find in us! 23 24

May all intemperate zeal for matters of doubtful disputation, all sentiments of bigotry and severity against our brethren, be happily swallowed up in this infinitely greater concern! and while others contend about *places* and *forms* of worship, may we pour out *our hearts* before him, and feel the *love of God* and man *shed abroad in them by his Spirit given unto us!* (Rom. v. 5.) 20, 21

SECT. XXX.

Christ's discourse with his disciples at Jacob's well: his visit to the Samaritans, and their regards to him. John IV. 27—42.

JOHN IV. 27.

AND upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman; yet

JOHN IV. 27.

THUS expressly did Jesus declare to the woman of Samaria that he was the Messiah; *and* immediately *upon this, his disciples* (who, as was said before, were gone into the city to buy food) *came* to this well, where Jesus had appointed SECT. XXX. John IV. 27

understood by the Jews, though a Roman would not so easily have entered into the force of them. Accordingly we find this interpretation was in fact given to them. John vii. 31—41. and ix. 22.

SECT. XXX.

pointed them to meet him; *and* they *wondered that he was* thus *talking* in so friendly a manner *with the woman*[a], whom they knew to be one of that nation so peculiarly obnoxious to the Jews. But though it gave them some uneasiness, *yet* they had such a reverence for him, that *none* of them *said, What dost thou seek* from this Samaritan? *or why dost thou talk with her?*

John IV. 27.

yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

28 *Then the woman,* seeing other company coming up to interrupt the discourse, immediately *left her water-pot,* or pail, behind her, as her thoughts were taken up with matters of far greater importance; *and went away* in haste *to the* neighbouring *city, and says to the men* of her

28 The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29 acquaintance there, *Come* directly to Jacob's well, and you may there *see a* wonderful *man, who has told me* in a manner *all that ever I did,* even some of the most secret circumstances of my past life: *is not this the* expected *Messiah?* I assure you it seems exceeding probable to me that he is; and he himself has told me so in so many words.

29 Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

30 *They therefore,* struck with so great a name, in concurrence with so strange an event, *went* in great numbers *out of the city, and came to him,* who still continued where the woman left him.

30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

31 *In the mean time the disciples intreated him* to refresh himself, *saying, Rabbi, eat* of the

32 provisions we have brought thee[b]. *But he,* referring to the conversation he had lately had with the woman, and to the preparation making for the conversion of the Samaritans, *said unto them* with an air of great satisfaction, *I have meat to eat that ye know not of,* which gives me a much better entertainment than you can bring

33 me, *The disciples therefore,* not understanding his

31 In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

33 Therefore said the

[a] *With the woman, μετα γυναικος.*] As the *article* is wanting, the Prussian Testament, and many others, render it *with a woman;* and Dr. Lightfoot, in his *note* on this place, has produced a great many unaccountable, and, some of them, very stupid passages from the Talmud and other Rabbinical writers, to prove that it was reckoned scandalous for a man of distinction *to talk publicly with a woman;* (see *Lightfoot's Hor. Heb. in loc.*) But the *disciples* surely knew that Jacob and Moses and others of their greatest and holiest *prophets* had done it; and some of them in circumstances remarkably resembling this, in which the *woman came to draw water;* compare Gen. xxix. 9—12. Exod. ii. 15—17. (See also 1 Sam. ix. 11—14.) It is plain the *wonder* here was that he talked with a Samaritan.—As for the omission of the *article,* see *note* b on John i. 1. p. 24, and the end of *note* d in this *section,* on John iv. 36.

[b] *Eat* of the provisions we have brought thee.] Their bringing back the provisions to him here makes it probable that he did not intend, had it not been on this occasion, to have gone into the town; and so (as was said in the *paraphrase,* ver. 27.) ordered his *disciples* to meet him at this place, which was undoubtedly well known to travellers.

[c] *There*

the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat?

his words in that spiritual sense in which he intended them, *said one to another* with some surprise, considering where he was, *Has any one* been with him in our absence, and *brought him* any [*food*] *to eat* here? *Jesus*, who knew the loss they were at to understand his meaning, *says*, to explain it *to them*. *My* most refreshing and delightful *food is to do the will of him that sent me* into the world, *and to finish his work* as fast as possible, in the conversion of souls and in the propagation of his kingdom; and I with pleasure can assure you, that it is now going on successfully. *Do not you say, that there are yet four months, and harvest cometh*[c]? Nay but *behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes* even now, *and survey the fields* round about you; *for they are already* laden with a plentiful crop, and appear *white unto the harvest:* alluding to the disposition of the people in general, and more particularly to the multitude of Samaritans, who, struck with the report of the woman, were coming to inquire after him as the Messiah; and unto whom he pointed and directed them to look, as being then within their view.

SECT. XXX.

John IV. 33.

34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

And he yet farther added, It is your happiness to be employed in such a work as this; for *he that* faithfully *reaps* the harvest of which I now speak, *receiveth* far more valuable *wages* than men can give, *and* has the great additional satisfaction of thinking that he *gathers in the fruit unto eternal life*[d]; *so that*, on this account, *both he that*

36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that

c *There are yet four months, and harvest cometh.*] Dr. Whitby and Grotius, and many others, understand this as if *our Lord* had said, "It is a *proverbial expression*, for the encouragement of husbandmen, that there are but *four months* between *seed-time* and *harvest*." And the author of the *late English translation* therefore renders it, (in his *paraphrastic* manner) *You commonly say, T'other four months, and the harvest will come.* But I cannot acquiesce in this interpretation: (1.) Because none of the learned writers mentioned above, nor Dr. Lightfoot, who is large on this text, could produce any such *proverb*. (2.) Because indeed there could be no foundation for it, since the distance between *seed-time* and *harvest* must differ according to the different kinds of grain in question. And (3.) Because if there had been such a *proverb*, it would have been improper to apply it here; since *our Lord* was not speaking of the period of time between *the prophets' sowing* and *the apostles' reaping* (to which *four months* has no analogy); but only means to tell them, that though they reckoned yet *four months* to the *earthly harvest*, the *spiritual harvest* was *now ripe*. So that I chuse, as Sir Isaac Newton does, to take the words in their plainest sense, as an intimation that it was then *four months* to the beginning of *harvest*; see *note* c on ver. 3. p. 161. And I take this passage to be of very great importance for settling the *chronology* of *Christ's ministry*.

d *Gathers in the fruit unto eternal life.*] I apprehend *our Lord's* thought here to have been more comprehensive than *commentators* have been aware of. He seems to compare the case of a *Christian minister* to that of a considerate *reaper*, who is supported in his fatigue, not only by a regard to his own *wages*, but to the advantage which the public receives by the *harvest* he gathers in. *This* the expression συναγει καρπον

SECT. XXX.

John IV. 36.

that sows and he that reaps may rejoice together; and those souls to whose salvation they have in different ways contributed, will be to both a crown of honour and objects of everlasting complacency and delight.

that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

37 *For* in this sense it may be justly said, that *herein is that* proverbial *saying* remarkably *true, One soweth and another reapeth;* for after he has sown his field, it often happens that a man dies before he gathers in the harvest, and so leaves it to another who enjoys the advantage of his pains.

37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

38 And thus it is that *I* have *sent you* forth *to reap* the fruit of *that on which you have not laboured* either to till or sow the ground; the prophets, and other holy men of former ages, having toiled as it were to cultivate the field, and thereby made your work a great deal easier than it would otherwise have been. So that the success of my preaching this day in your absence is an emblem of what God has wisely ordered in the course of his Providence: *others have laboured, and you are entered into* the field on which *their labour* has been carefully employed[e]. Let this engage you therefore to apply yourselves in earnest to your work with a becoming spirit and a ready cheerfulness.

38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

39 *Now* when the woman had informed the people of the discourse which she had had with Jesus, *many of the Samaritans from that city believed on him,* as some extraordinary person, *by reason of that saying of the woman, who testified* concerning him, *He told me all that ever I did.*

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him, for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

40 *When therefore the Samaritans* had heard the wonderful account the woman gave of Jesus, and *were come* with her to the well *to* see *him,* they were so taken with the manner of his deportment and the strain of his discourses, that *they entreated him to tarry with them* for some time, as being desirous of a farther acquaintance with him and of receiving farther benefit from his instructions: *and,* ready to lay hold of every opportunity of doing good, *he* went with them to their city, and

40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

41 *continued there two days*[f]. *And* there were *many more*

41 And many more believed,

καρπον εις ζωην αιωνιον seems plainly to import, and so is nearly parallel to Jam. v. 20, and suggests a most forcible consideration to diligence and zeal.—Καρπον here seems to be put for τον καρπον, *the fruit,* that is, *the souls* he gathers in.

[e] The field on which *their labour* has been employed.] This seems the signification of κοπον here, as Grotius well proves. Compare 2 Cor. x. 15.

[f] *Continued there two days.*] This was a proper *medium* between entirely neglecting them and giving them so much of his time and company as would have broken in upon the design of his journey into Galilee, or might have given umbrage to the Jews.

believed, because of his own word:

42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

more who in this time *believed* on him[g], *on account of his own discourse*, which they might also see confirmed by some extraordinary works. *And* they *said to the woman, Now we believe*, and that *not* merely nor yet chiefly *on account of what thou hast spoken* of him; *for we ourselves have heard him* teach, and have examined his credentials; *and*, by the most convincing evidence, we *know that this is really the Christ, the Saviour of the world*[h], even the expected Messiah, and are determined to regard him as such.

SECT. XXX.

John IV. 42.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us behold with pleasure the glorious example of our blessed *Redeemer*, and learn to imitate his zeal. It was *his meat and drink* to pursue *his Father's work*, to glorify God, and to do good to souls: and ought it not to be *ours?* Let us bless God for every opportunity of applying to it and every field of service, which Providence opens to us. Ver. 34

Let *gospel ministers* especially be thankful for all that hath been done to introduce their services, not only by the ministrations of the *prophets* under the *Old Testament*, but the *apostles* also under the *New*, and by succeeding *servants of Christ* in every age of the church. In this sense, with regard to us, is that *proverb* true, *One soweth and another reapeth.* We have *entered into the labours of others:* may others in time enter into ours! May the work be delivered over from one faithful hand to another and be carried on by each with growing zeal and success! Blessed time, when all the *workmen* shall meet and join their songs; and each of the souls *gathered into eternal life* shall be, to all concerned in their conversion or edification, an ornament of glory and a source of pleasure! 38 37 36

Surely, if we *know Christ* ourselves, we shall, like this *woman of Samaria*, be solicitous to communicate the knowledge to others, and shall sometimes forget our little *worldly interests* to attend to this 29 28

g *Many more believed* on him.] This was the more extraordinary, as they not only had a national prejudice against him as a Jew, but, living near mount Gerizim, had a particular interest in maintaining the usual worship there, which must be very advantageous to the neighbourhood. Perhaps on this they would no longer worship there, which might irritate the rest of the Samaritans, and might in part provoke the ill usage that Christ afterwards met with in this country. Luke ix. 52, 53.

h *The Saviour of the world.*] They might probably collect from what was prophesied by Jacob of the Messiah, Gen. xlix. 10. *To him shall the gathering of the people be*, that the *Gentile nations* were to receive some benefit by the Messiah's coming, and one way or another to be subjected to him; and Christ's discourse might confirm that apprehension: but there is no reason at all to believe they perfectly understood the doctrine of the *calling of the idolatrous Gentiles*, which was so long a *mystery* even to the *apostles* themselves.

a *After*

SECT. XXX. this vast superior care. May we *believe in him*, not merely on the report and *testimony of others*, but on our own *experience;* that having *tasted that the Lord is gracious*, we may bear a more lively and effectual testimony to him!

Ver. 41, 42

Let us watchfully observe the leadings of Providence, and whatever our own schemes may have been, let us still adjust our conduct by the intimations of present duty; and, especially where we have reason to believe that God is by his *Spirit* beginning to work on men's hearts, let us be ambitious of being *workers together with him. A word spoken in* such a *season is* remarkably *good*, and it is a great part of Christian and ministerial prudence to observe and improve those tender times.

SECT. XXXI.

Christ comes from Samaria into Galilee; and while at Cana, cures a nobleman's son, who lay at the point of death in Capernaum, Mark I. 14, 15. Mat. IV. 12. John IV. 43, *to the end.*

MARK I. 14.

SECT. XXXI. *NOW after John was cast into prison, and Jesus had heard* [*of it*] in Judea, where he then was, *he withdrew* from thence [*and*] *came into Galilee*[a] (as was said before, John iv. 3. sect. 29,) being willing to take the advantage of those impressions which the ministry of John might have made on the minds of the people there, who had so signal an esteem for him; an esteem which would be heightened rather than abated by the injurious things which they saw him suffer. Jesus came therefore into that country[b], *preaching the good news of the kingdom of God*, which was speedily to be erected by the Messiah, whom God had appointed to raise and govern it: *And saying*, Behold *the time* fixed by the ancient prophets *is* now *fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near;* see to it therefore, that you cordially *repent* of all your sins *and believe the*

Mark I. 14.

MARK I. 14.

NOW after that John was put in prison, [when Jesus had heard that—he departed *and*] came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God; MAT. IV. 12.

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

[a] *After John was cast into prison, Jesus withdrew and came into Galilee.*] It is strange that Mr. Whiston and some others should represent it as an argument against the *order* we have followed here, that it would have been imprudent and inconvenient for Christ to have gone immediately into Herod's territories, just after he had seized John; when two of the *evangelists* assured us this was the very *reason* of his journey. The cause of *John's imprisonment* was particular; and the reasons assigned in the *paraphrase* seem considerable, besides that already mentioned, John iv. 1—3 See *note* a, p. 160.

[b] Jesus came therefore into that country.] Mr. Le Clerc supposes (in his *Harmony*, p. 75.) that Jesus went from Sichar directly to Nazareth, and that *this visit* which he made to Cana (at ver. 46) was some time after he was expelled from Nazareth, and had dwelt at Capernaum. But that he took a circuit elsewhere before he went to Nazareth, is certain from John iv. 43, 44. compared with Luke iv. 14—16. And though we cannot positively say whether

the gospel, which I publish to you, that you may secure an interest in the blessings of it. SECT. XXXI.

JOHN IV. 43. Now after two days he departed thence, [*that is, from Sichar,*] and went into Galilee.

And having been prevailed upon (as we have seen before) to stop at Sichar in his way, *after* he had continued there *two days* with the Samaritans, *he departed* from *thence, and went* (as has been just now said) *into Galilee.* And he chose to make a journey through a considerable part of it before he returned to Nazareth, that the reputation he gained elsewhere might be some balance to those prejudices which the inhabitants of that place would naturally entertain against him: *for Jesus himself testified, that a prophet has no honour in his own country*;[c] where those that knew him in his childhood and youth can hardly be persuaded to look upon him with the reverence due to a messenger from God. John IV. 43. 44

44 For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem, at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

When therefore he came into Galilee, the Galileans received and entertained *him* with a great deal of pleasure (compare Luke iv. 14, 15,) for many of them had been witnesses to his surprising miracles *having seen all the* wonderful *things that he did at Jerusalem during the feast* of the passover *(for they also came to the feast,)* and they had now an expectation of seeing some of them renewed. *Jesus, therefore,* encouraged by this readiness of theirs to attend his ministry, pursued his journey till he *came again to Cana of Galilee*, which was the place *where he* before *had made the water wine.* 45 46

46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine.

And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum:

And while he stayed at Cana, *there was a certain nobleman* belonging to king Herod's court,[d] *whose son was* dangerously *ill at Capernaum*; [*Who*]

47 When

whether the *visit to Cana* was made in this *first journey*, or in the *other*, which is mentioned afterwards, (Luke iv. 44. Mat. iv. 25. and Mark i. 38, 39, sect. 36,) yet I have introduced it here, because John mentions it immediately after his coming from Sichar; and it has been a maxim with me in this work to take all the stories and discourses in the *order* they lie, if there be not (from other *evangelists*) a plain reason for *transposing* them.

[c] *For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honour in his own country.*] There is no manner of occasion here to render γαρ, *although*; for it is plain that this is spoken as the *reason* why he rather chose to travel into those parts of Galilee, and not to go directly to Nazareth; which is particularly called *his own country*, in distinction from Galilee, and even from Capernaum, Luke iv. 23.

[d] *A certain nobleman* belonging to king Herod's court.] Though Herod was only tetrarch of Galilee, yet was he commonly distinguished by the title of *king* (see Mat. xiv. 9. and Mark vi. 14. sect. 77,) and as Capernaum lay in his dominions, it is probable that this was one belonging to his *court*, who was *a nobleman* of some distinction. For this is properly the signification of βασιλικος, which the Syriac and Arabic versions render *a minister*, or *servant of the king*; and many have conjectured that the person who is here spoken of was Chuza, Herod's *steward*, whose *wife* is thought to have been converted on this occasion, and became afterwards an attendant on Christ. Luke viii. 3.

SECT. XXXI.

John IV. 46.

[*Who*] *when he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, went* in person at least a day's journey[e] cross the country *to him, and* earnestly *entreated him that he would come down* to Capernaum *and cure his son, for he was* given over by the physicians, and seemed *just ready to die.* *Jesus said therefore unto him* and them that
48 were about him, I perceive that, though the Samaritans shewed so great a regard to my word and the report of my miracles, *unless you see* with your own eyes some remarkable and repeated *signs and wonders, you will not believe;* thereby justly reproving him and them for that mixture of suspicion and slowness of faith which he
49 discerned in their minds[f]. *The nobleman,* weak as his faith was, determined nevertheless to urge the matter to the utmost; and therefore, without any explication or apology on that head, *says to him, Sir,* I beseech thee to *come down before my child die;* for the case is so extreme that a delay may be attended with the most fatal
50 consequences. Upon which, *Jesus,* to shew that it was not necessary for him to go in person to accomplish the cure, *says to him, Go thy way* home, for I assure thee that *thy son* is living, and at this instant, while I am speaking to thee, *is recovered* from his illness. *And the man,* though he had never seen or heard of a parallel case,[g] *believed the word that Jesus spoke unto him, and went away* without any farther importunity.

51 *Now* the day after he had taken his leave of Jesus, *as he was going down* to Capernaum, some of *his servants met him* on the road, eager to bring him such acceptable news, *and told* [*him,*] *saying, Thy son* who was so dangerously ill *is* now
52 *recovered.* And *therefore,* to compare it with the account that Jesus gave, *he* presently *inquired*

47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him and besought him, that he would come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.

48 Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe,

49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told *him,* saying, Thy son liveth.

52 Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend:

[e] At least a day's journey.] This may be very fairly inferred from ver. 52, as well as from the accounts the best *geographers* give of the situation of Cana and Capernaum.

[f] Reproving him and them for that mixture of suspicion, &c.] It is necessary to suppose some such reference to illustrate the justice of this reproof; for in the general it was very reasonable to expect that Christ should *work miracles* in proof of his Divine mission, as he himself does plainly intimate elsewhere; see John xv. 24. Who can tell but the very person now applying to him might have made some such declaration, that he would never *believe* such things till he *saw* them with his own eyes? *Christ* might mean by this reflection to humble him, and to shew him a specimen of his extraordinary knowledge as well as power.

[g] Though he had never seen or heard of a parallel case.] It is plain he had heard of *Christ's miracles,* but this is the *first* recorded, in which he cured the patient *at a distance,* and probably was hitherto, in this respect, unequalled.

mend: and they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

ed of them what was *the hour when he began to mend: and they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour,* or at one in the afternoon, *the fever left him* at once, and he grew well on a sudden

SECT. XXIX.

John IV. 50.

53 So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

The father therefore knew that [*it was*] *at the very hour in which Jesus said to him, Thy son is recovered: and* when he came to reflect on the astonishing circumstances of the case, *he and his whole family believed* that the person, by whom so convincing and beneficent a miracle was wrought, must be, not only as before supposed, some great prophet, but even the Messiah himself. 53

54 This *is* again the second miracle that Jesus did when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

This is again the second miracle which Jesus performed at Cana; and he wrought it *when he came out of Judea into Galilee;* a circumstance in which it agreed with the former[h]. 54

IMPROVEMENT.

How unreasonable are the passions and prejudices of mankind, and this in particular, that *a prophet* should have *no honour in his own country!* One would have imagined that *Jesus* at least, free as he was from all the follies of childhood and youth, should have been an exception; nay, indeed, that he should have been peculiarly honoured there, where his early wisdom and piety could not but be observed. John iv. 44.

Our Lord however intended them a visit, even at *Nazareth;* and it is the duty of his *ministers* to bear their testimony, *whether men will hear or whether they will forbear.* Yet should they learn of their Great Master to study as much as they can to obviate those prejudices, which might prevent their usefulness, and should use the most prudent and gentle methods to vanquish them.

Such was this beneficial *miracle of our Lord;* which may afford us many particulars worthy of our notice. With what affection and zeal does this tender *parent* apply to *Christ* on the sickness of *his child!* Let us not be less importunate when soliciting spiritual blessings in behalf of our dear offspring: and so much the rather as *their lives* are so precarious, and we know not how soon these lovely *flowers* may be cut down, and all farther petitions for them be for ever superseded. 47 49

Our Lord, while *at a distance* from the patient, wrought and 50, 51

[h] A circumstance in which it agreed with the former.] Compare John i. 43. and ii. 1. That the words must be taken with such a limitation, evidently appears from what John had before said of the many *miracles* which Christ had already wrought elsewhere; see John ii. 23. and iii. 2.

a *In*

SECT. XXXI. perfected the cure. And has he not still the same Divine power, though he does not exert it in the same miraculous way? Let not his *bodily absence* abate our faith, while praying for others or for ourselves.

53 *Salvation* now *came to this house*, and blessings infinitely more valuable, than noble blood, or ample possessions, or royal favour, or recovered health could give; for *the cure* wrought on the *body of one* was a means of producing *faith* in the *hearts of all.* Blessed *Jesus!* thy power was no less employed in the latter than in the former. Oh may that power work in such a manner on our souls as that we all may be disposed cordially to receive thee and cheerfully to venture our *eternal all* upon thee! May *we and our houses* concur in so wise and happy a resolution: and not insisting upon
48 *evidence* beyond what thy gracious wisdom has thought fit to give us, may we candidly receive the light we have, and faithfully improve it so as to be at length entitled to the *blessedness* of those *who have not seen and yet have believed*! (John xx. 29.)

SECT. XXXII.

Christ preaching at Nazareth is at first admired, but immediately after rejected: the people there making an attempt upon his life, he leaves them and comes to Capernaum. Luke IV. 14—30.

LUKE IV. 14.

SECT. XXXII. IT has already been observed that after John the Baptist was imprisoned *and Jesus* was acquainted with it, he left Judea and *returned into Galilee;* and from what follows it will be plainly seen that he went thither under the guidance and *in the power of the Spirit;*[a] for as a mighty impulse on his own mind determined him to undertake the journey, so an amazing Divine energy attended his progress through it; *and his renown* was spread abroad as soon as he arrived in Galilee, and *went*
15 *through all the neighbouring region. And,* ready to embrace all opportunities that offered to instruct the people, *he* went from place to place, and *taught in their synagogues with universal* admiration and *applause*[b].
16 *And* having thus prepared his way, *he came* at

Luke IV. 14.

LUKE IV. 14.

AND Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16. And he came to Nazareth,

[a] *In the power of the Spirit.*] It seems a very wild thought of Mr. Fleming's that this intimates, Christ was transported through the air hither, after his *temptation* in the wilderness; see *Flem. Christol.* Vol. II. p. 315.

[b] *With universal applause,* δοξαζομενος υπο παντων.] Our *translation,* which has rendered it *being glorified in all,* is indeed more literal: but *to glorify a preacher* is an uncommon phrase in English; and *that* I have used, is so plainly equivalent to the other in signification, that I hope it may be allowed as very just.

[c] Being

SECT. XXXII.

Luke IV. 14.

Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read.

at length *to Nazareth, where* it has been observed before, Mat. ii. 23, and Luke ii. 51, that *he was educated; and according to his custom,* which he constantly observed there and elsewhere, *he entered into the synagogue on the sabbath-day: and* out of regard to the high reputation he had lately gained, being desired by the ruler of it to officiate[c], he *stood up to read* the scriptures, which made a constant part of their public worship; see (Acts xv. 21.)

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias: And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

And the book of Isaiah the prophet was delivered to him, a paragraph of the law having been read before; *and unrolling* the volume of *the book*[d] *he found that place of it* (Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 3.) *where it was written* to this effect;[e] "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me* in an abundant degree, *for the* important *purpose to which he hath anointed me*[f], and solemnly set me apart; and important indeed it is, [*for*] *he hath sent me to preach good news to the poor* and afflicted[g], *to heal those whose hearts are broken* with sorrow, *to proclaim* free *dismission to* wretched *captives, even the recovery of sight to them that are blind* in prison; [*and*] *to set those at liberty who are bruised* with the heavy load of their fetters[h]: In a word, *to proclaim,* as by

17

18 The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

18

19. To preach the acceptable

19

[c] Being desired by the ruler of it to officiate.] One cannot but be amazed at the ignorance of Suidas, in arguing from hence that Christ was a *priest.* It is well known that any man of gravity and reputation might, at the request of the ruler, officiate on such occasions; compare Acts xiii. 15.

[d] *Unrolling* the volume of *the book.*] So αναπτυξας properly signifies; and I chuse to retain it, that the *form* of the books then used may be thus recollected: they were, as the copies of the Old Testament in the Jewish synagogues now are, *long scrolls of parchment,* that were rolled upon two sticks. The reader may see an excellent account of them in Mr. *Jer. Jones's Vindication of St. Matthew's Gospel,* chap. xv. p. 151—170. And this *form* of their books shews, in the most convincing manner, how improbable such *transpositions* are, as those learned harmonizers, Mr. Whiston and Mr. Manne, make the foundation of their respective *hypotheses.*

[e] *It was written* to this effect.] It is evident that the *quotation,* as it stands here, does neither exactly agree with the Hebrew nor the Septuagint. The many *old copies* in which that clause, ιασασθαι τους συντετριμμενους την καρδιαν, *to heal the broken-hearted,* is wanting, has inclined many learned *critics,* with Grotius, to suppose it added from the Hebrew; but one would rather conclude that Christ read the passage as it was, and that these words might accidentally be dropped by some early *transcriber.*

[f] *For the purpose to which he hath anointed me: ου ενεκεν εχρισεν με.*] It is very difficult to explain the *connection* of the *two clauses* in this passage, if we render ου ενεκεν either *because,* or *therefore*; and I cannot recollect that it ever signifies *because.* But the *translation* I propose seems to remove the difficulty; see Acts xix. 32.

[g] *Poor* and afflicted.] Grotius well observes that it is probable *some copies* might read HHANJIM, *the poor,* instead of HHANAWIM, *the meek,* which is the word made use of in Isaiah. And as to that clause of *restoring sight to the blind,* which is omitted in Isaiah, I am not able to determine whether *our Lord* in his discourse borrowed this clause from Isa. xlii. 7. by way of illustration; or whether (as Dr. Prideaux supposes in his *Connection,* Vol II. p. 547.) it was taken from some *Chaldee Targum* which is now lost.

[h] *Sight to them that are blind, and to set those at liberty who are bruised.*] It is beautifully

SECT. XXXII. by the sound of a trumpet, *that welcome year of the Lord*[i], which the year of jubilee, pleasing and grateful as it is, can but imperfectly re-present, though debts are then forgiven and slaves released and inheritances restored to their original owners."

Luke IV. 18.

acceptable year of the Lord.

20 *And having rolled up the book*, which was a long scroll of parchment, *he delivered it to the servant* of the synagogue whose proper office it was to take care of it; *and* then, according to the custom of the Jewish rabbis, *sat down* to preach (see Mat. v. 1. xxiii. 2, 3. xxvi. 55. and John viii. 2,) *and the eyes of all in the synagogue were attentively fixed upon him*, as they were very curious to know what he would say on a scripture which seemed so plainly to refer to the Messiah[k].

20. And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down; and the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 *And he began* to speak at large from this excellent and suitable passage; and the main tendency and purport of his discourse was *to say to them, To-day this scripture* I have now been reading *is* remarkably *fulfilled in your hearing*; for I am the person foretold under this character, and sent with such ample powers to fulfil these purposes of the Divine mercy.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 *And*, strong as their prejudices were against him, *they all* (by their very countenances (see Job xxix. 11) *bore* their *testimony to him* as a most excellent preacher, *and were astonished at those graceful* as well as comfortable *words*[l] *which pro-*

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

tifully observed by the judicious Mr. Cradock in his excellent book on the *Evangelists*, that the former clause seems an *allusion* to the wretched state of those *prisoners* who, according to the inhuman custom still retained in the *eastern countries*, had *their eyes put out*: and with regard to such as these, this Great Deliverer is represented as *restoring them*, a work far beyond all human power. See *Cradock's Harm.* p. 69.—I take them to be the same with those who are spoken of in the next clause as *bruised* with the weight of their *fetters*; for it is plain that even *blind captives* were sometimes loaded with them; as was the case with Samson, Judges xvi. 21. and with Zedekiah, 2 Kings xxv. 7.

i *That welcome year of the Lord.*] It is strange that any *ancient* or *modern* writers should argue from hence that *Christ's ministry*, lasted but *one year*, or a little more. One might as well plead, from 2 Cor. vi. 2. that *the day of salvation* included but *one natural day*.—Here is a plain *allusion* to the *Jubilee*; compare Lev. xxv. 9, 10. and Psal. lxxxix. 15.

k A scripture which seemed so plainly to refer to the Messiah.] Though many *commentators* of note apply Isa. lxi. 1. to the *good news* of the dismission of the Jews from Babylon, I refer it to the impartial reader to judge, whether it be not much more probable that ver. 4, 5, 6. (where the *prophet* speaks of *repairing the waste cities, planting vineyards*, &c.) may be either meant in a *spiritual sense*, or literally predict the *temporal prosperity of the church* after the *conversion of the Jews*, than that Christ should mistake the true *sense* of the text, or build his argument on a mere *allusion*; see *Dr. Sykes's Vindication of Christianity*, p. 259, and *Jeffery's True Grounds*, p. 120.

l *Astonished at those graceful words.*] The phrase in the original λογοις της χαριτος, literally signifies *words of grace*; which, it is probable, may refer to the *agreeable manner* of Christ's discourse, as well as to

SECT. XXXII.

proceeded out of his mouth; so that they could not forbear *saying* to each other, even while he spoke, *Is not this* he that was brought up among us, *the son of Joseph* the carpenter? And if it be, how is it possible that a man of so mean an education should be able to discourse thus excellently well? Luke IV. 22.

23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician heal thyself; whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

And he said to them farther, *You will undoubtedly say to me* in the words of *that* common *proverb, Physician, cure thyself*; [*and*] for the satisfaction of thy own relations and neighbours, if thou art really so extraordinary a person, *do also here* at home, *in thine own country, those* miraculous *works which, as we have heard, were done at Capernaum*, and elsewhere[m]. 23

24 And he said, Verily, I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

But to expose the vanity of this suggestion, *he* went on, and *said, Verily I say unto you, that no prophet is acceptable in his own country* (compare John iv. 44, page 180,) and therefore I know that you who have been acquainted with me from my infancy will, through envy and prejudice, refuse me an opportunity of working such miracles, and would indeed be still as obstinate and unbelieving as before, if you should see them. 24

25 And I tell you of a truth, Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months

But let it be remembered by you that God sometimes punishes men for this unreasonable temper, by directing his prophets to confer those favours on strangers, of which their countrymen and neighbours have rendered themselves so unworthy. For 25

the *matter* of it: and as they could not but take notice of the majesty and grace with which he spoke, so it must naturally fill them with *astonishment*, considering the meanness of his birth and education; see *Elsner, in loc.*

[m] *At Capernaum*, and elsewhere.] It is strange that Dr. Clarke and many others should lay so much stress as they do on this, as an argument to prove that this visit to Nazareth was made after that to Capernaum, in which *those miracles* were wrought which are recorded, Mark i. 21—34. and Luke iv. 33—41. (sect. xxxv. xxxvi.) when Luke himself so plainly says that *he came down from Nazareth to Capernaum*, and then gives an account of *those miracles* (Luke iv. 30, *& seq.*) and Matthew also introduces the history of them with saying (Mat. iv. 13.) that *leaving Nazareth he came and dwelt at Capernaum.* —We are expressly told by John that Jesus after the miracle which he wrought at Cana in Galilee, went with his mother and his brethren and disciples to Capernaum, and continued some time, though not very long there (John ii. 12. sect. xxiv.) and it is very possible he might visit it again in his passing through Galilee (John iv. 43, 44. sect. xxxi.) which if he did after the *cure* wrought on the *nobleman's son* there, (which undoubtedly preceded this visit to Nazareth,) he would certainly meet with some extraordinary regard, as the *cure* was performed *at a distance*, and many other miracles might then be wrought there: so that this passage may refer to these and other *miracles* not particularly recorded by Luke; as we have seen before that John refers to others (John ii. 23. and iii. 2.) which neither he himself had mentioned, nor indeed any of the rest of the *evangelists.* —If it be asked why Christ did not perform such miracles *here* as elsewhere? we answer—that this whole discourse is intended to prove that God might dispense these extraordinary favours as he pleased;—and they do not appear to have *brought their sick* to him, and seem to have suspected his power (compare Mat. xiii. 58. and Mark vi. 5. sect. lxxiii.) a suspicion, the unreasonableness of which was greatly aggravated by the credible report of what he had done in the neighbourhood, and by the knowledge they had of his early piety and exemplary behaviour.

SECT. XXXII.

Luke IV. 25. For this *I tell you as a* certain *truth*, which well deserves your consideration, That *there were many* poor *widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was*, as it were, *shut up for three years and six months* [n], *so that* there was no rain, and *a great famine prevailed in all the land: And* yet *Elijah was sent to none of them* with a 26 miraculous supply of meal and oil, *but to a widow woman at Sarepta*, [*a city*] of the Gentiles, in the country *of Sidon*. (1 Kings xvii. 9.) *And* 27 *there were* also *many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; yet none of them was* miraculously *cleansed, but* that singular favour was bestowed on *Naaman the Syrian* [o], a Gentile, and one of a hostile nation. (2 Kings v. 14.) Presume not therefore on your being my countrymen and neighbours, so as on that account to reject my message, lest you provoke God to send those blessings to strangers, and even to Gentiles, of which such infidelity and ingratitude would render you unworthy.

Nothing could be more disagreeable to them 28 than such an intimation *and all that were in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with* the most outrageous *fury: And* 29 *rising up* at once, in a tumultuous manner, without any reverence to the place or day, or any sense of justice or common humanity, *they* violently *cast him* out of the synagogue, and *out of the city* too; *and brought him to the very brow of the mountain on which their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong*, and dash him 30 to pieces. *But* Jesus, when he had permitted their madness to go thus far, confounded their sight in such a miraculous manner, that *he passed through the midst of them* unknown [p], *and went away*

months, when great famine was throughout all the land:

26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill (whereon their city was built,) that they might cast him down headlong.

30 But he passing through the midst of them, went his way.

n *The heaven was shut up for three years and six months.*] This is again asserted by the apostle James (chap. v. 17.) either as grounded on *our Lord's authority* here, or as a circumstance established by *tradition*; for in both places it is spoken of as a thing well known: nor can we doubt but the account is very exact, though the particular time is not determined in the Old Testament, nor is it certainly deducible from it.—Lightfoot and others have observed that there is somewhat here remarkable in this circumstance of *time*, as it agrees with the continuance of *Christ's public ministry*; that as *Elijah shut up heaven* by his prayers, so that *it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months*, so from the baptism to the *death of Christ the heavens were opened* for the like space of time, and *his doctrine dropped as the rain, and his speech distilled as the dew.* (Deut. xxxii. 2.) See *Lightfoot's Harmony*, and *Grotius, in loc.*

o *None of them was cleansed but Naaman the Syrian.*] Of the force of the *particle* εἰ μὴ here, and in some other remarkable places, see the *note* on John xvii. 12. sec. clxxix.

p *Passed through the midst of them, unknown.*] Whether the *miracle* lay in rendering himself entirely *invisible*, or in putting on some *other form*, or in affecting their eyes or minds in such a manner that they should not *know him*, we cannot certainly determine; but it seems evident that there was something *miraculous* in the case. Compare John viii. 59. Luke xxiv. 16. and 2 Kings vi. 18—20.

away to the neighbouring city of Capernaum, where he abode for some time. SECT. XXXII.

Luke IV. 27.

IMPROVEMENT.

WE see that it was the *custom* of our blessed *Saviour* to frequent the *synagogues* every *sabbath-day:* how well therefore does it become his servants to be constant in their attendance on public ordinances, especially since those of the *gospel* are in many respects so much nobler than any which the *Mosaic* institution would admit!

In the *synagogues* the *scriptures* were constantly *read;* and it is matter of pleasing reflection that, in all ages of the *Christian church*, the *reading them* hath usually been made a part of the service in most of its solemn assemblies. Let it still be so with us for this reason, among others, that so glorious a testimony to the genuineness of *scripture* may not be impaired in our hands, but transmitted to those that shall arise after us. 17

And surely the *Old Testament*, as well as the *New*, deserves our attentive perusal; in which, if we are not strangely negligent, or strangely prejudiced, we must often meet with remarkable *prophecies of Christ* shining with a pleasing lustre, like *lights in a dark place*, (2 Pet. i. 19.) How amiable a view of him is given in that which he now opened! Let us seriously attend to it. It is a moving representation that is here made of the deplorable *state* in which the *gospel* finds us! The helpless *prisoners* of Divine justice, the wretched *captives of Satan*, stripped and *wounded*, the eyes of our understanding *blinded*, and the powers of our souls *enfeebled;* and, as it were, *bruised* with those chains which prejudice and vice have fastened upon them! But in these miserable circumstances *Jesus* appears to *open the doors of our prison*, to *strike off our fetters*, and even *to restore our sight.* He comes to *enrich* our impoverished souls, and to *preach* a far better *jubilee* than *Moses* could proclaim; the free forgiveness of all our sins and the recovery of an inheritance of eternal glory. Surely it should be to us a most *acceptable time. Blessed are the people that know this joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance!* (Psal. lxxxix. 15.) Ver. 18, 19

In some sense *this* instructive and comfortable *scripture is this day fulfilled in our ears* likewise. Let us also *bear our testimony* to the *gracious words* of this welcome messenger whom *God hath anointed* for such happy purposes! 21, 22 20

One would have imagined that while the *eyes* of his auditors were *fixed upon him*, their *souls* should have drank in his doctrine as *the thirsty earth* sucks up *the rain*, and that every heart should have

SECT. XXXII.

have been open to embrace him. But, O blessed *Jesus*, while thou art preaching these *glad tidings of great joy*, what a return dost thou find! Thou art ungratefully rejected, thou art impiously assaulted; and had their rage and malice been able to prevail, *the joyful sound* would have died into empty air as soon as it began, and this thy *first sermon* at *Nazareth* had been thy *last*.

Ver. 28, 29

Thus disdainfully art thou still *rejected* by multitudes who still hear the same message echoing from thy word. And is there not a malignity in the hearts of sinners which might lead those of our own days to the outrageous wickedness of these *Nazarenes*, were their opportunities the same, rather than they would bow their stubborn hearts to the *obedience of faith*? But while they are *crucifying thee afresh* by their sins, and *putting thee to open shame*, may we honour thee as the *Son of God*, the *Saviour of men*; and labour by the ardour of our love and the steadiness of our obedience, in some measure to balance the ingratitude of those who, while they are opposing thee, are destroying themselves!

SECT. XXXIII.

Christ goes to Capernaum, and teaches in the synagogue there with great acceptance; and calls Peter and Andrew, and James and John, to a more stated attendance upon him. Mat. IV. 13—22. Luke IV. 31, 32. Mark I. 16—20.

MAT. IV. 13.

SECT. XXXIII.

Mat. IV. 13.

AND Jesus *leaving Nazareth*, from whence *he* was expelled and driven out in the ungrateful manner that was before described, *came and dwelt* for a while *at Capernaum*, which was *a* considerable *city of Galilee*, *that lay on the sea-coast*, even on the northern shore of the lake of Gennesareth, *in the confines of Zebulon and Naphtali*; and from thence he made several small excursions to visit the neighbouring places. And this was ordered by a special Divine Providence, *that what was said by the prophet Isaiah* (chap. ix. 1, 2.) *might be fulfilled*[a], When speaking of *the land of Zebulon, and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea*, and the country *about* those parts of *Jordan*[b], which is called by the general

MAT. IV. 13.

AND leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, [a city of Galilee] which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: [LUKE iv. 31.]

14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles:

a *That what was said by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled.*] The common *translation* is word for word correspondent to the *original*: but the sense, as it stands here, is so entirely the same, that I was unwilling to spoil the structure of the *paraphrase* by crowding in the word *saying*; nor do I think such an exactness necessary in order to render a *version* perfectly faithful.

b *About* those parts of *Jordan.*] That περαν sometimes has this signification will appear by comparing Josh. xii. 1, 7. and Numb. xxxii. 19. Septuag.

c *Galilee*

general name of *Galilee of the Gentiles*[c] (because so many Gentiles were early settled there, and had filled it with a variety of superstitions), he says, "That though God had once made these nations vile, yet he would hereafter render them glorious[d]; since even there, by the settlement and preaching of the Messiah among them, *The people that sat in darknesss saw* (that is, should surely see) *a great* and glorious *light*, to disperse that ignorance and vice which before clouded them; *and* even *to them that sat* miserable and helpless *in the* dark *region and* gloomy *shadow of death* itself, in the most melancholy and the most dangerous condition, *light has* remarkably *sprung up*[e] to cheer their hearts, and guide them into the ways of peace and happiness."

SECT. XXXIII.

Mat. IV. 15.

16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

16

17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And *from that time* of his departure into Galilee[f], *Jesus began to preach* in all the places that he came to in a more public manner, *and to say, Repent*, and turn unto the Lord, *for* he is now fulfilling his ancient promises, and *the kingdom*

17

c *Galilee of the Gentiles.*] The learned Drusius has given a large account of the reason of this name, and concludes it was *the upper Galilee* in the land of Naphtali, whereas *the lower* lay in Zebulon, and Capernaum was situated on the confines of both. Grotius traces the name up to Gen. xiv. 1. but most *commentators* refer it to 1 Kings ix. 11—13, supposing that Solomon's giving a tract of land here to Hiram occasioned it to be filled with foreigners, and to be peopled with a mixture of Phœnicians, Egyptians and Arabians; according to the account that Strabo gives, *Geograph.* lib. xvi. p. 523.

d Though God had made them vile, yet he would hereafter render them glorious.] I follow Mr. Mede's just and beautiful version and interpretation of Isa. ix. 1. See *Mede's Works*, p. 101, 102. and *Jeffery's Review*, p. 125, 126. where that interpretation is both vindicated and improved: and I see no reason to doubt that it is *originally* meant of the *illumination* and *honour* these afflicted countries should receive by the presence and preaching of Christ.

e *Light has sprung up.*] The *Heathen* writers represented the arrival of some great public benefactor in a place as *a new light* sprung up in the midst of darkness; see *Elsner, Observ.* Vol. I. p. 19.

f *From that time* of his departure into Galilee.] It is but just before that Matthew speaks of *Christ's departure into Galilee* (ver. 12.) and it is much more probable that he refers in general to *this*, than to the time of his *leaving Nazareth* (which he has mentioned in ver. 13), as it is evident from Luke iv. 14, 15, and John iv. 43—45, that *Christ began to preach* in the synagogues of Galilee before he went to Nazareth. And thus I might have introduced *this text* as parallel to Mark i. 15. but that I would avoid as much as possible breaking the thread of the narration; compare *notes* b and c in sect. xxxi. p. 172, 173. The attentive reader will easily perceive that I suppose *our Lord* made only *one tour* about Galilee in the four or five last months preceding his *second passover*, of which Matthew gives a general account below, Mat. iv. 23—25. sect. xxxvi. Nor can I see that Sir Isaac Newton had any just reason to conclude it *a second circuit* quite distinct from the former. It is true indeed that *our Lord* is said, Mat. iv. 13. after *leaving Nazareth*, to have *come and dwelt at Capernaum*; but if that should be allowed to imply his making this the place of his more stated residence so as to call it *his home*, it is evidently intimated that he *did not stay long* in it at first; and shortly after it is spoken of only as *one of the cities* in which he was *sent to preach*, Mark i. 38. Nor can I find that, after he began to preach, he ever *continued long* in any one place.

SECT. XXXIII.

kingdom of heaven is at hand[g]. *And* this was the doctrine which *he was teaching them* during the time of his abode at Capernaum, and this he made the subject of his preaching in their synagogue *on the sabbath days*; not being discouraged by the ill usage that he met with at Nazareth upon his preaching of the same doctrine there. *And they were* powerfully *struck*[h] and very much affected *with his doctrine; for his word was* attended *with* an air of *authority* and majesty, which incomparably exceeded that low and servile manner of preaching which the Scribes and Pharisees commonly used in retailing their precarious traditions and insipid comments to the people.

Luke IV. 31. 32

LUKE IV. 31. And [he] taught them on the sabbath-days.

32 And they were astonished at his doctrine; for his word was with power.

Mark I. 16. *And* it was about this time that, *as Jesus was walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren*, that have been already mentioned[i], *Simon*, who was also *called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for* by their occupation *they were fishers*. *And* after some circumstances, an account of which will presently be given (sect. xxxiv.) *Jesus said to them, Come after me, and* from henceforth attend me constantly in the course of my ministry, and *I will make you to become fishers of men*, and give you such abundant success in your ministry, that the number of souls converted by you shall be greater than that of the fish you have been used to catch. *And they*, being struck with a very wonderful miracle[k], the particulars of which will

17

18

MARK I. 16. Now as [Jesus] walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw [two brethren,] Simon [called Peter] and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; (for they were fishers:) [MAT. iv. 18.]

17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. [MAT. iv. 19.]

18 And straightway they

[g] *The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*] See *note* [h] on Mat. iii. 2. p. 96.

[h] Powerfully *struck.*] See Luke ii. 47, 48, *note* [e] p. 91.

[i] *Two brethren*, that have been already mentioned.] John gives us an account (chap. i. 40—42, sect. xxi.) that Andrew and Simon had before been *called* to the knowledge of Christ upon the banks of Jordan, and that the *name of Peter* had been then given to Simon: and it is probable that, from their first acquaintance with him, they *followed Jesus* for some time, and went with him to Cana and Capernaum (John ii. 2, 12. sect. xxiii. xxiv.) and afterwards to Jerusalem (John ii. 13, 17. sect. xxiv.) and tarried with him while he continued in Judea. (John iii. 22, sect. xxvii.) But when the Pharisees grew jealous of the number of his followers, and Herod was offended at the popularity of John, we may suppose that Jesus at his return to Galilee might think it prudent to dismiss *his disciples* for a time, till he himself had gone about from place to place to preach the gospel, and had informed the people more particularly of the character of his person and the nature of his doctrine: or possibly they might *leave him* at the time when the Samaritans prevailed upon him to go with them to their city. (John iv. 40, sect. xxx.) for after this we read no more of *his disciples* being *with him*, till he now found them at the *sea of Galilee*. For they no sooner were gone home but they returned again to their old employment, and continued in it till they were now taken off from any further regard to their worldly business, and were particularly *called* by Christ to a constant and stated attendance upon him: see *Lightfoot's Harmony* on Luke v. 3.

[k] Being struck with a very wonderful miracle.] The account of *this miracle* (which is recorded by Luke, chap. v. 1—11.) I shall consider in the *next section*, and

they forsook their nets and followed him.—[MAT. iv. 20.]

19 And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw [other two brethren] James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship [with Zebedee their father] mending their nets. [MAT. iv. 21.]

20 And straightway he called them: and they [immediately] left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him. [MAT. iv. 21, 22.]

will presently be related, *immediately forsook their nets*, though the fishing trade was all they had to depend upon in life, *and followed him.* SECT. XXXIII.

And going a little way from thence he saw two other brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; and they were in a ship by the sea side, *with Zebedee their father*, employed in *mending their nets*, which had been broken by the vast draught of fishes they had taken just before. *And he immediately* applied to them as he had done before to Peter and Andrew, and *called them* to follow him: *and they* no sooner had received his orders, but *presently* they *left their father Zebedee with the hired servants in the ship; and*, in consequence of the secret energy which attended that call, they joined with Peter and Andrew, and with the greatest cheerfulness and readiness *went after him*, being determined to continue with him as his stated attendants: and they were all afterwards honoured with extraordinary favours from their Master; especially John, who was his bosom friend and came to be called, by way of eminence, The disciple whom Jesus loved.

Mark I. 19.

20

IMPROVEMENT.

SUCH was the zeal and courage of our blessed *Redeemer*, that he no sooner had been persecuted and assaulted at *Nazareth*, but he went and preached in the synagogue at *Capernaum*. Thus may all the opposition that we meet with in the course of our duty, animate, rather than overbear, our resolution in performing it! How

Luke iv. 31.

and shall there give my reasons, in *note* a, for supposing it happened at this time, and was not, as Mr. Whiston would have it, the occasion of another call to *these disciples*. But I would here observe, that besides him, some who agree with me in this particular, yet, out of regard to the supposed *regularity* of St. Luke's narration, place *this call* of the *four disciples* after the *ejection of the devil*, and the *cure of Peter's mother-in-law* at Capernaum, and Christ's travels through Galilee, which are recorded, Mat. viii. 14, 15. iv. 23—25. and Mark i. 21—39. (Sect. XXXV. XXXVI.) See *Cradock*, *Le Clerc*, *Wells*, *Clarke* and *L'Enfant*, in their *Harmonies*. But they seem to have forgot that St. Mark expressly asserts (chap. i. 21.) that after the calling of these four disciples *they went into Capernaum, and straightway on the ensuing sabbath he entered into the synagogue*, and there *cast out the devil*, &c. and then (ver. 29.) *forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John*, and *Simon's mother was cured*.—Now it seems one of the most important *rules* for settling the *harmony* of the *evangelists*, that where any one of them has expressly asserted that he follows the *order of time*, we should, in regard to him, *transpose* others who do not assert equal exactness in that particular; (see *Jones's Vindication of Matthew*, p. 111, 112.) This is the case here; and therefore I have here *transposed* not only Luke, but also Matthew, who uses *notes of time* much more frequently, and seems to me in the main more exact in the *series* of his story than Luke.

a We

SECT. XXXIII.

How happy was *the land of Zebulon and Naphtali* in the visits of such a guest! And may we not add too, how happy is *our own land* in being visited by the *everlasting gospel*, which is now much more clearly discovered to us than it was to *these coasts* while *Christ* began to open his ministry among their inhabitants.

Mat. IV. 15.

In us is this *prophecy* of *Isaiah* eminently *fulfilled:* We but a few ages ago *sat in darkness;* and behold we *see a great light.* Our country, amidst all the advantages of its soil and situation, was, in a spiritual sense, *the region and the shadow of death;* but the *Sun of Righteousness is risen upon us,* nor do we only behold his rising beams, but his meridian lustre. May we not be so ungrateful as obstinately to shut our eyes against it, lest *the valley of vision* and *Emanuel's land,* should on the whole prove to us the *land of destruction* and *the valley of death* itself!

16

That this may never be our case, let us diligently attend to this *Divine Teacher,* who speaks with such *authority,* and whose *words* are so weighty and *powerful.* May we feel the energy and authority of them! May they call us off from every undue attachment to the business or the pleasures of life! And if he should ever see fit to try us, as he did these his servants, with a command to *forsake* our nearest *relations* and our *earthly all,* for his service, let us do it with pleasure; remembering on the one hand, that *he who loves father or mother, wife or children, houses or lands, more than Christ, is not worthy of him;* and on the other hand, that he who abandons these engagements *for his sake, shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, and, in the world to come, life everlasting.* (Mat. x. 37, and Mark x. 29, 30.)

Luke iv. 32.

Mark i. 17.

SECT. XXXIV.

St. Luke gives a more particular account of a miraculous draught of fishes, by which Peter and his three partners were prevailed upon statedly to follow Christ. Luke V. 1.—11.

LUKE V. 1.

SECT. XXXIV.

THE calling of those four celebrated apostles, Peter and Andrew and James and John, was briefly related above; but considering the important part which most of them bear in the following history, we shall here give a more particular account of it.[a] *Now it came to pass, that* while

Luke v. 1.

LUKE V. 1.

AND it came to pass, that as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesareth,

[a] We shall here give a more particular account of it.] Mr. *Whiston* (in his *Harmony*, p. 251 and 254) supposes, with some others, that this is a distinct story from that of *the calling of these disciples*, which we have in the preceding *section*, and that they were *then* called only to an *occasional*, but *now* to a *stated* attendance on Christ. But I could not acquiesce in this for the following reasons: (1) There are many leading circumstances *the same* in the narrations of both; as, for instance,

SECT. XXXIV.

Luke V. 1.

while Jesus continued to reside at Capernaum, *when the multitude pressed upon him* with eagerness *to hear the word of God; as he stood by the lake of Gennesareth,*[b] on the banks of which he had been walking, (Mark i. 16, sect. xxxiii.)

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake; but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets.

2 *He saw two* little *vessels standing by* the side of *the lake, but* with no person in them; for *the fishermen,* after the labour of a very unsuccesful night, *were gone out of them, and were washing their nets* in the sea as they stood on the shore.

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land; and he sat down and taught the people out of the ship.

3 *And entering into one of the vessels, which belonged to Simon* Peter, with whom as well as with his brother Andrew[c]; we have already seen that he had formed some acquaintance on the banks of Jordan,[d] while John was baptizing there, (John i. 37—42. sect. xxi.) *he desired him that he would put out a little way from land,* that he might thus avoid the crowd, and at the same time be more conveniently heard; *and* at a proper distance *he sat down, and taught the multitude out of the vessel.*

4 Now when he had left

4

since; that *Peter, Andrew, James* and *John, left their ships, their nets,* and *their father*; or, as Luke expresses it, *left all,* to follow Christ, on his promise that he would make them *fishers of men.* (2.) There is no circumstance of the story we have now before us which may not be reconciled with the other; as the attentive reader will perceive by my *paraphrase,* especially on ver. 11. where (as in many other cases) I have chosen in a few words to suggest the solution of seeming inconsistencies, rather than to state the difficulties and answers at large. (3.) If this interpretation be not allowed, then neither Matthew nor Mark have given us any account of Christ's *calling* these four illustrious persons and intimate friends of Matthew to a *stated* attendance on him. And (4.) There seems no reason to believe that these *four disciples* forsook Christ again within a *few days,* or even a *few hours,* after that *call* which Matthew and Mark have recorded. Yet this Mr. Whiston must suppose; for it is plain Christ left Capernaum and proceeded on his progress the very *next day after those cures* which so directly followed *that call* of these disciples which is related by those *two evangelists*; see *note* k on Mark i. 18, p. 184. and compare Mark i. 35—39. and Luke iv 42—44. sect. xxxvi.

[b] *The lake of Gennesareth.*] This is the same with what is elsewhere called *the sea of Galilee,* (Mark i. 16.) and *the sea of Tiberias,* (John vi. 1,) being distinguished by these names, as it was situated on the borders of Galilee, and the city of Tiberias lay on the western shore of it. And for its other name Gennesareth, as Herod had a palace near Tiberias, there were delightful *gardens* on the banks of it, which possibly might be the reason of *this name,* which some would have to be derived from GENEI SARUM, *the gardens of princes*; though others rather think it to be only a corruption of the word *Cinnereth,* or *Cinneroth,* which is the *name* by which *the sea* was called in the Old Testament, (Numb. xxxiv. 11. and Josh. xii. 3.)—It was a large collection of waters, through which the river Jordan passed, and was continually supplying it with a fresh quantity of water. Josephus tells us it was *an hundred and forty furlongs* long, and *forty* broad: (*Joseph. de Bell. Jud.* lib. iii. cap. 10. (al. 18.) § 7, p. 257. *Havercamp.*) And it was usual with the Jews to call such places *seas* where there was such a large extent of water, see *Lightfoot's Harmony,* and *Drusius in loc.*

[c] His brother Andrew.] The name of Andrew is omitted by St. Luke in the relation that he gives us of this story; but it is plain from the account of it that we have just now had from Matthew and Mark in the foregoing *section,* that Andrew was then present with Simon, and that they both were *called* at the same time.

[d] He had formed some acquaintance on the banks of Jordan.] See *note* i on Mat. iv. 18 p. 184.

SECT. XXXIV.

Luke V. 1. *And when he had made an end of speaking* to the people, *he said to Simon, Put out* yet farther *into the deep* water, *and* then *let down your nets* into the lake *for a draught* of fishes. 5 *And Simon answering, said unto him, Master, we have been labouring all night and have caught nothing, nevertheless I will let down the net,* and make another trial *at thy word,* both in obedience to it, and in dependance on it. 6 *And* accordingly *when they had done it, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes; so that their net brake* in several 7 places as they were drawing them up. *And they beckoned to their partners* James and John *who were* at some distance from them *in the other vessel, to come and assist them; and they came and filled both the vessels, so that they were* overloaden, and drew so much water that they seemed *ready to sink.*

8 *Now Simon Peter seeing* [*this*] *fell down before the knees of Jesus* in amazement, *and,* covered with confusion, *said,* Lord, what am I, that thou shouldest come into my vessel to me? let me entreat thee now to *go out from me: for I am* such *a sinful man, O Lord,* [e] that I am utterly unworthy to receive and entertain thee, nor dare I to continue in the presence of so great and 9 holy a prophet. *For* this amazing proof that Jesus had now given of his power was such that *astonishment seized him and all that were with him on account of the* vast *draught of fishes which* 10 *they had taken: And in like manner also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners* in the trade *with Simon,* were struck with wonder and amazement at the sight of this surprising miracle. *And Jesus said to Simon, Do not fear,* for, instead of doing thee any harm, I *from this time* design to employ thee in much nobler work, in which I will give thee such happy success that *thou shalt captivate men* [f], in greater

left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5 And Simon answering, said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto *their* partners which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw *it* he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so *was* also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

[e] *Go out from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*] Peter could not but conclude there was some peculiar presence of God with a person who could perform such a *miracle*: and a consciousness of sin made him afraid to appear in the presence of such a one; lest some infirmity or offence should expose him to some more than ordinary punishment. Compare Jud. vi. 22. xiii. 22. and 1 Kings xvii. 18.——It is also well known that the *ancients* thought it improper and unsafe (where it could be avoided) for good men to be *in the same ship* with persons of an infamous character; nor would the *heathens* sometimes permit the very *images* of their *deities* to be carried in the vessel with such, or even with those concerning whom there was any strong suspicion. See *Elsner, Observ.* Vol. I. p. 202, 203.

[f] *Thou shalt captivate men.*] This is the exact English of ζωγρων, which is so translated, 2 Tim. ii. 26. To *catch* implies something more of *artifice* than the word carries in it, or the occasion seems to require.

greater abundance than those fishes which thou now hast caught. SECT. XXXIV.

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed him.

And when they had brought their vessels to land, they, (that is, first, Peter and Andrew, and presently after them, James and John, who were mending their broken nets with Zebedee their father) upon Christ's repeating the call, *left* their vessels and nets, with the fish they had taken, even *all* they had in the world, *and followed him;* being now determined to attend statedly upon his ministry, that they might thus be fitted for the great work in which he intended to employ them. Luke V. 11.

IMPROVEMENT.

How wonderful a choice does *Jesus* make of those who were to be the chief ministers in his kingdom! Surely the same Divine power which prevailed on these honest *fishermen* to *leave* their little *all*, to *follow him*, could with equal ease have subdued the hearts of the greatest and wisest of the nation, and have engaged them to have attended him in all his progress through the country, with the exactest observance and the humblest reverence: but he chose rather to preserve the humble form in which he at first appeared, that thus he might answer the schemes of Providence, and by *the weak things of the world confound them that are mighty*, (1 Cor. i. 27.) Ver. 11

Yet we may observe that he does not go to *call* them that stood *all the day idle;* but, on the contrary, confers this honour upon honest industry; on them that had been *toiling all the night* in the proper duties of their station and profession in life. Let us pursue our business with vigilance and resolution; assuring ourselves that, however mean it be, *Christ* will graciously accept us in it; and let us fix our dependance on his blessing, as absolutely necessary to our success. 4, 5

These pious *fishermen let down their nets at Christ's word*, and it was not in vain. How vast was that power which brought such a *multitude of fishes* into it! but how much greater and more apparently Divine was the energy which, by the ministration of one of these illiterate men, converted at once a much greater number of *souls*, and turned the despisers and murderers of *Christ* into his adorers! (See Acts ii. 41.) 6

Blessed *Jesus*, we would humbly bow ourselves before thee as the Lord of nature and of grace; and instead of saying with *Peter*, *Depart from us, for we are sinful men*, we would rather say, "*Lord*, for that very reason, while we own ourselves most unworthy of thy presence, we most importunately entreat it: Come unto me, *O Lord*, Ver. 8

SECT. XXXIV.

O Lord, for I am a sinful man, and if thou stand at a distance from me, I perish! Come, and recover my heart from the tyranny of sin; come, and possess snd fix it for thyself!"

Ver. 9, 10

That secret power which these good men felt on their souls while the words of *Christ* were sounding in their ears would be to them a *token for good* as to the success of their ministry upon others. Surely we cannot wish any thing of greater importance for the edification of the church, than that the persons who are employed in its public offices may themselves experimentally know the power of Divine grace, and be brought to a determination to *follow Christ* whithersoever he goeth, before they undertake to invite and persuade others to do it.

SECT. XXXV.

Christ entering into Capernaum, teaches in the synagogue, and casts out a devil; and coming into Peter's house, cures his mother-in-law of a fever. Mark I. 21—31. Mat. VIII. 14, 15. Luke IV. 33—39.

MARK I. 21.

SECT. XXXV.

WHEN our Lord had thus called Peter and Andrew, *and* James and John, *they* all left the side of the lake, and *entered* with him *into* the city of *Capernaum; and immediately on the sabbath-day*[a], *going*, according to his custom, *into the synagogue, he taught* [*them*] the important truths which he was in so extraordinary a manner commissioned to vindicate, or to reveal.

Mark I. 21

22 *And they were* again *struck with amazement*[b] *at* the sublimity and excellency of *his doctrine, for he was* continually *teaching them* in such a manner *as one who had* an immediate *authority* from God to dictate to them; *and not as the scribes*, their established teachers, who dealt in precarious traditions and fanciful allegories; the amusement of light minds, but utterly unfit

MARK I. 21.

AND they went into Capernaum, and straightway on the sabbath-day he entered into the synagogue and taught:

22 And they were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

[a] *And immediately on the sabbath-day.*] It is in the *original* τοις σαββασιν, in the *plural number;* and it is frequently expressed in the same manner where it is plainly to be understood of a particular day, as Mat. xii. 1. xxviii. 1. Acts xiii. 14. and elsewhere. There is no doubt, but it is spoken here of the *next sabbath*, and probably of the very *next day* after his coming back with his disciples to Capernaum; see *note* k on Mark i. 18. p. 184.

[b] *They were* again *struck with amazement.*] It has already been observed that they were thus *amazed* at his first coming to preach among them (Luke iv. 32. sect. xxxiii.) and there seems also to have been something in the *discourses*, as well as in the *miracles* of this last *sabbath* that he spent among them at this time, which raised their wonder, and affected them in a peculiar manner; as appears from the multitude of *sick people* which were brought to him that *evening;* see Mark i. 32, 33. Luke iv. 40. and Mat. viii. 16. in the *next section.*

[c] *The*

SECT. XXXV.

fit to alarm the conscience and to captivate the heart.

Luke IV. 33. And in [their] synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil; and cried out with a loud voice, [Mark I. 23.]

And there was in their synagogue a man that had the spirit of an unclean demon[c], or fallen angel, possessing him, by which he was miserably distorted and agitated; *and he*, either compelled to bear an unwilling testimony to Christ, or desirous by malicious praises to bring him into suspicion as a confederate with those infernal spirits, *cried out with a loud voice. Saying*, in the name of the rest, *Let us alone; what hast thou to do with us, O Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us*, by driving us out of our abodes on earth to the regions of darkness? *I* well *know thee*, and, under all the disadvantages of thy present appearance, can sufficiently discern *who thou art;* and therefore dread thee as *the Holy One of God*, whom he hath sanctified and sent into the world for the destruction of my kingdom in it; but take notice that I do not begin the quarrel by offering thee any injury or affront.

Luke IV. 33.

34 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, *thou* Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. [Mark I. 24.]

34

35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, [*and* torn him] he [cried with a loud voice, *and*] came out of him, and hurt him not. [Mark I. 25, 26.]

But Jesus, scorning praises from so impure a mouth, *rebuked him, saying, Be silent, and come out of him: and*, upon this, *the demon having thrown him* violently from his seat *into the midst* of the assembly, [*and*] *having* terribly *convulsed him*[d], *cried with a loud voice* [*and*] *came out of him; but* was so restrained by the Divine power and mercy that he *did him no* farther *harm*[e]; and the man immediately recovered, and was perfectly well.

35

And

[c] *The spirit of an unclean demon.*] It is well known that a late learned and ingenious writer hath revived the notion long since maintained by Mr. Joseph Mede and Dr. Bekker, that these supposed *demoniacs* were only *lunatics* or *epileptics:* but on the most impartial perusal of what has passed between him and his learned antagonists, I am fully convinced that there is no sufficient reason for departing from the received interpretation; and I should think this story alone a convincing proof on the side of it. It is most incredible that an *evangelist* should have been left to ascribe this man's disorder to *the spirit of an unclean demon*, if it were only *lunacy* or the *falling sickness;* or that a *physician* of common sense should speak of it as a memorable circumstance that such a *distemper* did not *hurt* a man by leaving him: see ver. 35. —I retain the word *demon*, as the *epithet unclean* seems to have little force when joined with *devil*, being necessarily implied in it.

[d] *Having* terribly *convulsed him.*] This seems to be the proper meaning of the word σπαραξαν that is used by Mark here, which signifies *to shake* or *move* with violence; and to this purpose Grotius has observed that σπαραγμος is sometimes used to signify *a convulsion*. And it is much more natural to understand it thus than to suppose *the devil* to have *torn him*, (according to the common *translation*) which leads the reader to imagine that he grievously *wounded him*, when Luke expressly says that he *hurt him not*.

[e] *Did him no* farther *harm.*] This is probably the sense of μηδεν βλαψαν αυτον; for while the *convulsion* continued it must have given some pain, and might have been attended with lasting disorder, had not the restraining and healing power of Christ prevented.

SECT. XXXV.

Mark I. 27. *And they were all* exceedingly *amazed* at so miraculous a cure, *so that they inquired of each other, and said, What an* extraordinary *event is this? [and] what a new* and unexampled *doctrine is this? for* behold, he does not only distinguish himself by his incomparable manner of teaching, but *with* majestic *authority, and* efficacious *power, he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they* instantly *obey him, and come out* of the possessed, shewing thereby that they are sub-
28 ject to him. *And his fame* was so raised by this signal miracle, that it *went forth immediately through all the region of Galilee,* and made way for his reception in the progress he afterwards took *into every place of the neighbouring country.*
29 *And presently* after this miraculous cure, Jesus *going out of the synagogue* with his disciples, *they came, with James and John* in their company, *into the house of Simon and Andrew,* who
30 being brothers, did then live together: *And Simon's wife's mother* was dangerously ill, and *kept her bed*[f], *of a violent fever; and* having seen the miracle which he had wrought but just before in the synagogue, *they presently tell him of her, and entreated him* that he would be pleased to
31 interpose *for her* recovery. *And coming* into the room where she lay, *and standing near her, he took her by the hand, and raised her up* in her bed; *and* with an air of majesty *rebuked the fever*[g], *and immediately the fever left her* at once; *and she* was instantly restored to such a degree of strength that she *arose and waited upon them;* being so far from needing the assistance of others, as she had done before, that she became capable of taking her part in the business of the family.

MARK I. 27. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine *is* this? for with authority [and power] commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him [and come out.] [LUKE IV. 36.]

28 And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee, [into every place of the country round about.] [LUKE IV. 37.]

29 And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a [great] fever, and anon they tell him of her, [and besought him for her.] [LUKE IV. 38.]

31 And he came [and stood over her,] and took her by the hand, and lifted her up, [and rebuked the fever;] and immediately the fever left her, and she [arose, and] ministered unto them. [LUKE IV. 39.—MAT. VIII. 14, 15.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Mark I. 27. JUSTLY may we join our *astonishment* with that of the inhabitants of *Capernaum,* and say, What manner of teaching is this? and with what regard should it be received, when the *devils* themselves, and the most desperate *diseases,* are thus apparently subject to him who uses it?

We

[f] *Kept her bed.*] This seems the proper meaning of the word κατακειμένη.

[g] *Rebuked the fever.*] There could be no inconvenience in the *evangelist's* using this *phrase,* more than in saying, *he rebuked the wind and sea* (see Mat. viii. 26.) for it is hardly to be thought the Jews would imagine *the fever* a real *person;* but it was quite otherwise as to their notion of *demons.*

[h] The

We see the malice of *Satan* in *possessing* and tormenting the *bodies* of men. God then permitted it, to render *Christ's* triumph over him so much the more illustrious, and the appearance of that great *Deliverer* so much the more welcome[h]. Such diabolical operations as these are now restrained; and it is matter of great thankfulness that they are. But would to God that malignant enemy did not, in a yet more fatal manner, *possess the souls* of men and *work in the children of disobedience!* Yet *there* can the power of *Jesus* prevail, to *bind the strong man and spoil his goods.* SECT. XXXV. Luke IV. 32.

Wisely did *Christ silence* the suspicious *praises* of *an unclean spirit;* and vain is all the hope which men build merely on those *orthodox professions* of the most important truths, in which *Satan* himself could vie with them. 34, 35

Christ, returning from the *synagogue,* finds the *mother-in-law of Peter* detained from the solemn assemblies, a prisoner at home under an afflictive providence, which that circumstance of *confinement* probably rendered yet more afflictive to her. But the mercy which the evening brought with it was a rich equivalent for all the sorrows of the day. Jesus, their welcome guest, appears as the great *Physician* both of soul and body; a touch of his *hand* assuages the tumult in her veins, and at his *voice* the distemper leaves her. Surely, as the great *Lord* in the kingdom of Providence, he performs those *cures* which are now wrought by natural means, and is to be owned in them. Must not each of Mark I. 29, 30 31

us

[h] The appearance of that great *Deliverer* so much the more welcome.] It would be very foolish to imagine that God suffered these unhappy persons to be *possessed* merely that Christ might have the honour of *curing* them: but it is to be considered that the view under which Christ is most frequently represented is as the great *antagonist* to the *prince of darkness,* and the *gospel* has its foundation in the *victory* which Satan has gained over mankind; compare Gen. iii. 15. Mat. xii. 28, 29. 1 John iii. 8. Heb. ii. 14. and Rom. xvi. 20. (as also Mat. vi. 13. John xvii. 15. Eph. vi. 16, and 1 John ii. 13, 14. iii. 12. v. 18, 19. in all which places ὁ πονηρὸς seems to signify the *wicked one,* that is, *the devil,* whose powerful influence over men is intimated or expressed in each of them:) and it appears from *Wisd.* ii. 24, that the Jews before Christ's time had something of this notion, and considered the wicked in general as taking part with the *devil:* the words are, *Through envy of the devil came death into the world, and they that do hold of his side do find it.* The inspired *texts* above shew that the expression is just; and it was certainly on this account a most wise and gracious dispensation to permit the *devil* about this time to give some unusual proofs of his existence, power and malice, in thus attacking *men's bodies;* which would naturally convince them what a dangerous enemy he was to their *souls,* and what need they had of the patronage of Christ; as the sensible *victory of Christ* in these *dispossessions* would be a proof and specimen of that illustrious and complete triumph over him and his confederate powers in which *our Lord's mediatorial kingdom* is to end. No kind of *miracles* therefore could be more fit to attest his *mission,* and to promote his *interest* among men; and hence it is that hardly any are more frequently and circumstantially described.—This seems a sufficient answer to the difficulty proposed by *Mr. Mede* (see his *Works,* p. 28), and a clear proof that we shall do no service to *Christianity* by endeavouring to disapprove the reality of these *possessions,* or by dropping the mention of the *infernal powers* in our preaching, how fashionable soever such omissions may grow.

[a] *When*

SECT. XXXV. us thankfully acknowledge how often he hath *rebuked fevers* and other distempers by the skill of physicians, and the efficacy of medicines; so that they have departed from us perhaps when we esteemed them desperate, and had received *the sentence of death in ourselves.*

Luke IV. 39. Let us learn to imitate the pious *gratitude* of this *good woman,* who, when recovered, *immediately arose and ministered unto Christ.* Thus let it be our care that those lives which are spared by his goodness, and that strength which is renewed by his power, may be faithfully and affectionately devoted to his service.

SECT. XXXVI.

Christ having performed several cures on the evening of the sabbath-day, retires early the next morning to his devotions; and declining a longer abode at Capernaum, takes a circuit about Galilee, preaching and working miracles. Mark I. 32—39. Luke IV. 40. *to the end.* Mat. VIII. 16, 17. *and* IV. 23. *to the end.*

MARK I. 32.

SECT. XXXVI. THE remainder of the day Jesus spent in Peter's house; *and in the evening, when the sun was set,* and consequently the sabbath was

Mark I. 32 ended[a], *they brought unto him* on their beds and couches, which they scrupled before to carry[b], *all that were ill, and many that were possessed*

Luke IV. 40 *with devils:* Yea, *all that had any* persons in their houses *sick of various distempers, brought them unto him* for relief; *and he* sent none of them away with a denial, but with a sovereign authority *cast out the* [*evil*] *spirits with a word; and* treating those that were diseased in the most gracious and compassionate manner, he *laid his hands on every one of them, and healed all that were sick,* without the use of any means, how

Mat. VIII. 17 inveterate and desperate soever their distemper was: *That* thus *it might* appear to *be accomplished* in some measure *which was spoken* of him in a more noble and important sense *by the prophet Isaiah*[c], *saying* (chap. liii. 4), "*He himself*

MARK I. 32.

AND at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and [many] that were possessed with devils. [MAT. VIII. 16.—— LUKE IV. 40.]

LUKE IV. 40. All they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them unto him: and he [cast out the spirits with *his* word, and laid] his hands on every one of them, and healed [all that were sick.] [MAT. VIII. 16.—MARK I. 34.—]

MAT. VIII. 17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet,

[a] *When* the sabbath was ended.] It is well known that the Jews reckoned their *day* from evening to evening, and that the *sabbath* begun and ended at *sun-set.* See Lev. xxiii. 32.

[b] Which they scrupled before to carry.] We have a memorable instance of this *scruple* in John v. 10—16. sect. xlvi.

[c] In a more noble and important sense *by the prophet Isaiah.*] It seems evident that Isaiah, in the place here referred to speaks of the *sufferings* which Christ endured for us; for on account of these only could he be *esteemed* (as it is added in the end of the verse) *stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.* So that the *evangelist* has only

introduced

phet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

self graciously *took our infirmities* upon him, SECT. XXXVI. *and* with incredible labour, self-denial and compassion, *bore* [*away*] the burden of *our diseases*,[d] and happily delivered us from those Mat. VIII. 17 miseries which our corruption and depravity had introduced." *And* this occasioned such a concourse of people, that in a manner *the whole city* of Capernaum, *was gathered together at the door* of the house in which Jesus was; some coming as humble petitioners for themselves or their friends, and others as curious spectators of the surprising miracles he wrought.

MARK I. 33. And all the city was gathered together at the door. Mark I. 33.

LUKE IV. 41. And devils also came out, of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them, suffered them not to speak; for they knew that he was Christ. [MARK I. 34.]

And there were *devils also* that *came out of many, crying out* with great violence (as that before had done which had been cast out by him in the synagogue, *and saying*, as that other did, We know thee who *thou art, the* promised *Messiah* and *the Son of God*. *But he severely chid them, and did not suffer them to speak* these things so frequently and largely as they would otherwise have done: *for they* well *knew that he was the Messiah*; but as wise reasons made him, in his own discourses, often to decline the opportunities he had of expressly avowing that title and character, so they engaged him in a much stronger manner to be more particularly cautious with respect to evil spirits, of receiving it from them.[e] Luke IV. 41.

MARK I. 35. And in the morning, rising up a great while before day [when it was day] he

Thus was it that the day was spent in preaching and the evening in working miracles: *and* after all this labour and fatigue, Jesus allowed himself but a very short repose; for *in the morning* Mark I. 35.

introduced it as an *allusion* to those words, as being capable of the sense here given in themselves; though we are certainly to understand them in a more exalted sense when we consider them in their connection. Or if they should be understood by any as if it had been said, "Though he miraculously cured our diseases, yet he was thus ungratefully censured;" it must be then allowed on this less natural interpretation, that Peter uses them *allusively* when he applies them to the *crucifixion of Christ*, as he evidently does, 1 Pet. ii. 24. Such instances are frequent in the sacred writers; and they are elegancies and beauties rather than imperfections. Had it been argued from this text that the Messiah must have *healed the sick*, there had been then indeed some room for an objection.

[d] *Bore away* the burden of *our diseases*.] Grotius has well observed the *emphasis* of the word ἐβάστασεν which signifies to *carry a heavy load*, (Rom. xv. 1. Gal. vi. 2,) and so does well express the indefatigable *labours of Christ*, spending the evening in *healing the sick*, probably with many intermingled discourses, after he had employed the day in *preaching*. I have endeavoured to suggest this idea in the *paraphrase*.

[e] Cautious of receiving it from them.] It is probable that if it was not by mere *constraint* that these *evil spirits* made this confession, it was (as was hinted before on Luke iv. 33, p. 191.) with an artful *design* to bring *our Lord* into suspicion as acting in *confederacy* with them: and the perverse Pharisees might perhaps lay hold of this occasion of fixing on Christ that impious and senseless calumny, that *he did not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils*, Mat. xii. 24.

f *In*

SECT. XXXVI.

ing he rose before it was light,[f] *and as the day was coming on, he went out* of the house where he had lodged, to avoid the concourse of the people or any interruption from the family, *and* privately *departed to a desert place* in the neighbourhood; *and there prayed* to his heavenly Father in secret, pouring out his soul in the most copious and affectionate manner.

he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.—[LUKE IV. 42.]

Mark I. 35.

36 *And* when the day was something advanced and crowds of people came to inquire after him, *Simon* Peter, *and they that were with him*, (who have been already mentioned as his partners and companions,) guessing where Jesus was, went

36 And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him.

37 out and *followed after him. And when they had found him* at his private devotions, *they said unto him*, Master, the providence of God calls thee now to more public service; for *all the people* of the city *are* assembled yonder and are *seeking after thee*[g].

37 And when they had found him, they said unto him, All *men* seek for thee.

Luke IV. 42.

And what they said was immediately confirmed; for *the multitudes sought after him* with so much diligence, that they traced the steps of Peter and his companions, *and*, while they were speaking, *came* even *to* the place in which they had found *him*: *and* they *would* fain *have detained him* awhile, and pleaded in a very importunate manner *that he should not depart from them.*

LUKE IV. 42. And the people sought him and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

Mark I. 38.

But they could not prevail: *and he said to them* that were his constant attendants, *Let us go* directly *into the neighbouring towns, that I may preach there also*, without returning back to Capernaum at present; *for*, though we have many friends and well-wishers there, *I must* by all means *preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; as for that purpose I am sent* into the world

MARK I. 38. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for [I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent] therefore came I forth. [LUKE IV. 43.]

[f] *In the morning—before it was light:* ωρωι ενυχον λιαν.] This does sufficiently express the sense of the *original:* for ενυχον λιαν does properly signify, *when the night was very far advanced*, or *when it was yet deep night;* and either of these interpretations, in this connection, implies that the *dawning of the day* was near at hand. And thus it may be easily reconciled with Luke; for γινομενης ημερας, which the common *translation*, renders, *when it was day*, might as well have been rendered *as the day was coming on:* for γινομενης may be understood (as Grotius has observed) not only as expressive of the time that is *already come*, but as implying what is *near at hand*, or what is forming now, and ready to approach; (compare John xiii. 2, and the *note* there, sect. clxix.)—Some have indeed maintained that *different facts* are referred to in the *texts* of Mark and Luke before us; the former referring to Christ's *rising*, the latter to *his going out:* but it seems that Mark connects *his going out* so immediately with *his rising*, that no stress can be laid on such a distinction.

[g] *All the people are seeking after thee*] It is very likely that *Peter, and they that were with him*, warm as they were with the expectations of a *temporal kingdom*, might think this a very favourable opportunity of increasing *Christ's popularity*, on which those hopes were built.

h Con-

SECT. XXXVI.

Mat. IV. 23.

MAT. IV. 23. And Jesus went about all Galilee [and cast out devils] teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people. [MARK I. 39. LUKE IV. 44.

24 And his fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought unto him all sick people, that were taken with divers diseases and torments; and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jerusalem; and *from* Judea, and *from* beyond Jordan.

world by my Father, with the most extensive designs of usefulness, [*and*] *therefore I came forth* from his more immediate presence.

And thus *Jesus took a circuit* with his disciples *through all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues*, wherever he had an opportunity, *and preaching the good news of the kingdom* which God was about to erect; *and* he confirmed and illustrated what he said [h], by *casting out devils, and healing every disease, and every malady of the people* among whom he came.

And his fame went through all the neighbour- 24
ing country of *Syria; and they brought to him* from thence, as well as from nearer places, *all*, that is, great numbers of *sick people* [i], *that were seized with a variety of distempers and* most *tormenting* and incurable *pains, even demoniacs, and lunatics, and paralytics* [k]; *and he healed them*, not excepting those whose cases were the most deplorable and helpless. *And* these miraculous 25
cures, together with his excellent manner of preaching, rendered him so popular, that *great multitudes* of people *followed him from* all the towns of *Galilee, and* from the region of *Decapolis* [l], *and* even from *Jerusalem, and* the rest of *Judea* [m], *and* all [*the country*] *about Jordan* [n], both on its eastern and western banks.

IMPROVE-

[h] Confirmed and illustrated what he said] It is justly and beautifully observed by the author of a late *Discourse on the Miracles of Christ*, that they were not only a *proof*, but a *specimen* of the power he claimed as the Messiah. Thus his *giving sight to the blind* illustrated his power of enlightening the prejudiced minds of men; his *healing their bodies* shewed how able he was to heal their souls, and was a specimen of his authority to forgive sin, as it was in part an actual removal of its punishment; his *casting out devils*, was an emblem of his final victory over *Satan*; and his *raising* particular persons *from the dead* was a convincing display of his power to accomplish a general resurrection.

[i] *All*, that is, great numbers of *sick people*.] It would be endless to enumerate the *texts* where common sense requires us to take the word *all* in this general manner; see Mark i. 37. Luke iii. 21. John iv. 29. xiv. 26. 1 Cor. ix. 22. and Phil. ii. 21.

[k] *Even demoniacs, and lunatics*, and *paralytics*.] *Possession, madness*, and the *palsy*, are justly reckoned as cases of great misery and little hope; the *evangelist* therefore properly instanced in these. It is an evident proof that these were thought distinct cases; for the *different readings* are so ill supported as not to deserve a particular mention.

[l] *From Decapolis*.] This is well known to have been a tract of land on the east side of the *sea of Galilee*, in which *ten cities* were situated near each other and formed into a distinct district. It formerly belonged to the *half tribe of Manasseh*.

[m] From *Jerusalem, and Judea*.] Hence Sir Isaac Newton concludes that Christ had been at Jerusalem at his *second passover*; and that these people had attended him from thence: see *Newton on Prophecy*, p. 151. The *circuit* described above might indeed have been the employment of *four months*, and probably took up most of that time; but Matthew might have used this expression, if persons who came from Jerusalem followed Christ here, though he himself had never been there at all. On the whole, however ingenious and probable the *hypothesis* of this learned author is, it is liable to so many objections that, on the maturest deliberation, I durst not venture to build upon it the structure of an *harmony* entirely different from that of all other *commentators*; except Osiander, which (if I mistake not) in most places agrees with his maxims.

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IMPROVEMENT.

Mark I. 32,33 How delightfully were the *sabbaths* of *Christ* spent in the midst of all his fatigues! How pleasantly did *the sun go down* upon him, when he had been imitating that heavenly luminary in his steady and constant course; scattering a brighter light and more beneficial influences upon all about him.

35 And when the *sabbath* had been spent in these labours of piety and love, how happily were the fruits of it carried into the ensuing *week?* The first *morning* of it, that it might be most pleasantly and most profitably begun, *Jesus rose before it was light*, that he might enjoy God and himself in religious retirement. It surely becomes us sometimes willingly to deny ourselves the gratifications of sleep, that we may have the better opportunity for devotion. And it should be the peculiar care of those who are employed in God's public service, to cultivate communion with him in private; lest while they *keep the vineyard* of others, their own be *neglected* and impoverished. (*Cant.* i. 6.)

Luke IV. 42. Our Lord's retirement is interrupted by *the people*, who came to *inquire after him* and desired to have *detained him* longer among them: and who that has ever known the pleasure of conversing with him, would not desire that it might be longer

Mark I. 38. continued and frequently renewed? But in this instance, *their request* must be *denied*; the great purposes of his *ministry* required his presence elsewhere, and he breaks through all that importunity which would have broken in upon his schemes of usefulness: a resolution which we must learn in some cases to imitate if we would prosecute the business of life with vigour and success.

Luke IV. 43. Let us often reflect *wherefore we are sent*; and judge by that where God would have us to be; that by the intimations of his pleasure every motion may be regulated, and every abode determined.

Mat. IV. 23, 25. Wherever *Christ* removes, he still *goes about doing good*, publishing the gospel and confirming it by the most amazing works of power and of mercy. How well were these *miracles* suited to awaken men's attention, and to convince their consciences of his Divine mission! Well might *his fame* go over the *whole country*: may it extend itself now to the remotest regions, that *all the ends of the earth* may *look unto him and be saved*, (*Is.* xlv. 22,) while he displays a *healing power* over their *spirits* proportionable to that which he here exerted on their *bodies!*

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maxims. I rather chuse to add an *appendix* representing the *order* in which the *sections* are to be read according to him; which will, to the more curious part of my readers, be sufficient, and will excuse me from the necessity of swelling these *notes* in such a manner as I must otherwise have done.

n *About Jordan.*] See *note* b at Mat. iv. 15. p. 182.

a That

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Christ begins his sermons on the mount with the beatitudes and general exhortations to exemplary piety. Mat. V. 1—16.

MAT. V. 1.

AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

MAT. V. 1.

AND [*Jesus*], in his circuit through Galilee, *seeing the* vast *multitudes* which flocked around him from all parts, thought it proper to inform them more largely than he had hitherto done concerning the nature of his doctrine and the design of his appearance; that he might correct those false notions of the Messiah's kingdom[a] which so generally prevailed, and which would prove so pernicious to those who were governed by them. He therefore *went up to a mountain*[b], that he might be the better heard by the crowds which surrounded him; *and when*, according to the custom of the Jewish rabbis in their sermons, *he was set down* to teach them, they that were already *his disciples*, and others that were disposed to receive information, *came near to him.*

SECT. XXXVII. Mat. V. 1.

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

And opening his mouth[c], with an air of great solemnity, to intimate the importance of what he was going to deliver, *he taught them* the most suitable and excellent lessons. And as happiness was the great end to which the wisest philosophers 2

a That he might correct those false notions of the Messiah's kingdom.] In order to enter into the beauty of this discourse it is necessary to consider it as addressed not merely to the *apostles* (who are not yet chosen under that character), but to his *disciples* in general, and to vast numbers of people who, affected with the sight or fame of *his miracles*, were now assembled around him; probably expecting that he would immediately declare himself *the Messiah*, and full of those false notions of his *kingdom* which so generally prevailed. Mr. Blair, in his excellent *discourses* on *this chapter*, has shewn (I think beyond all others) how directly the beginning of *this sermon* is levelled against these *prejudices*. He has also observed (as it is very necessary to do) what a beautiful *correspondence* there is between the *characters* described in these *beatitudes*, and the *blessings* connected with them.

b *Went up to a mountain.*] It does not appear in what part of Galilee this *mountain* was situated; and (if the *cure of the leper*, which Christ performed at his *descending from it*, was wrought in the confines of some *other city*, and not of Capernaum) there is no reason to suppose, as most *expositors* do, that it was in the neighbourhood of Capernaum; (see Mat. viii. 1, 2; and *note* [b] on Luke v. 12; sect. xliv.) Mr. Maundrel says, that what is now called *The Mount of the Beatitudes* is a little to the north of *Mount Tabor*, (*Trav.* p. 115); and if this be its true situation it must be at some considerable distance from Capernaum.—I shall elsewhere give some hints of the reasons which have led me to conclude that *this discourse* was different from, and previous to, that which Luke has given us in the sixth *chapter* of his gospel, ver. 20. *& seq.* though many of the sentiments and expressions are the same; (see *note* [a] on Luke vi. 20. sect. liii.)

c *Opening his mouth.*] I do not take the expression of *opening his mouth* to be always a *pleonasm*; the manner in which it is used elsewhere may sufficiently prove the contrary; compare Judg. xi. 35, 36. Job iii. 1. xxxiii. 2. and Acts viii. 35. x. 34. And thus the ancient Greek and Roman writers used it, as Elsner proves, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 20, 21.

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phers undertook to conduct their hearers, our Lord began his discourse with several weighty, though uncommon remarks as to the surest method of obtaining it: *saying*,

Mat. V. 2.

3 You naturally congratulate the rich and the great; and expect, under the reign of the Messiah, to be advanced to wealth and dignity and power: but *happy*[d] *are the poor in spirit*[e], those humble souls that, deeply conscious of their ignorance and guilt, can quietly resign to Divine teachings and Divine disposals, and accommodate themselves to the lowest circumstances which Providence shall appoint them; *for* howsoever they may be despised and trampled on by men, *theirs is the kingdom of heaven;* they will be most likely to embrace the gospel, and they alone will be entitled to its most important blessings for time and eternity.

3 Blessed *are* the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 You admire the gay and jovial part of mankind, and please yourselves with the hopes of joy and festivity: but I say unto you, *Happy are* the men of a more serious temper, and especially *they that* now *mourn* under a penitent sense of their sins[f]; *for they shall* ere long *be comforted* with the discoveries of God's forgiving love, and be cheered with the reviving rays of his everlasting favour.

4 Blessed *are* they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.

5 You imagine that military courage and martial exploits are to introduce the kingdom now to be erected, and to raise men to distinguished stations in it: but I rather say, *Happy are the* men who are *meek* and gentle under injuries and provocations, and are cautious in offering but patient in bearing them; *for they* shall weather many a storm which would bear down the rugged

5 Blessed *are* the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.

d *Happy.*] I have here used the word *happy* rather than *blessed*, as more exactly answering to μακαριοι, as the other does to ευλογημενοι; and I the rather chose to render it thus because *our Lord* seems to intimate by it, not only that the dispositions here recommended would be the way to future blessedness, but that they would immediately be attended with the truest happiness, and the most noble pleasures.

e *The poor in spirit.*] Though I cannot think, with Mr. Joseph Mede (p. 25), that this chiefly refers to a disposition to *part with their possessions* for charitable purposes; or confine it, with Grotius and Baxter, to a disposition to *bear poverty* with resolution, submission and cheerfulness: yet I doubt not but the latter of these is comprehended in that *humility* which is here expressed by *poverty of spirit;* which is a temper that indeed is absolutely necessary in order to our being cordially reconciled to the gospel method of salvation.

f *They that mourn* under a penitent sense of their sins.] It seems proper to restrain it within these limits, since there is *a sorrow in the world* which ends in *death*, 2 Cor. viii. 10. and though *mourning* for the calamities of life be often allowable and commendable, yet it is so natural an affection, and sometimes in its degree so sinful, that one can hardly suppose *our Lord* here pronounced *a blessing* upon it in such general terms.

ged and obstinate, and at length (as the Psalmist expresses it, Psal. xxxvii. 11.) "*shall inherit the earth*, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace," which can only have its seat in such gentle bosoms.

6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.

Happy are they that, instead of desiring insatiably the possessions of others, and endeavouring to obtain them by violence or deceit, eagerly *hunger and thirst after righteousness*[g], and make it the delightful business of life to improve in all the branches of virtue and goodness; *for they shall* never be disappointed in these pious pursuits, but *be* abundantly *satisfied* with the righteousness they seek (compare Prov. xxi. 21.) and be competently supplied with every necessary inferior good. (See Mat. vi. 33.) 6

7 Blessed *are* the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

Far from training you up to delight in scenes of desolation and slaughter, I rather declare, *Happy are the merciful* and compassionate, that feel the sorrows of others as their own, and with tender sympathy hasten to relieve them; *for they shall obtain* that *mercy* from God which the best and happiest of mankind need, and on which they continually and entirely depend. 7

8 Blessed *are* the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

Indulge not a thought of those licentious gratifications which are often mingled with victory and are accounted as the pleasures of the great: *happy are the* men that not only abstain from these gross enormities, but are concerned that they may be *pure in heart* too[h], avoiding every irregular desire and mortifying every unruly passion: this resolute self-denial shall be the source 8

[g] *That hunger and thirst after righteousness.*] The very pious and judicious writer I mentioned above, in *note* [a], has taken a great deal of pains to prove that these words are chiefly designed to recommend *a love of justice* towards our fellow-creatures; and is for rendering χορτασθησονται, *they shall be fed to the full*, while those who are violent and rapacious as *young lions*, may *lack and suffer hunger*, Psal. xxxiv. 10. But the *phrase of hungering and thirsting after righteousness* must surely be expressive of much more than merely a steady care to treat all mankind equitably, and to avoid what would be injurious and oppressive; and we may rather understand it as a just and beautiful description of a holy ardour of soul, in pursuit of the most eminent attainments in *universal goodness*, which will end in complete *satisfaction*, as the necessary consequence of perfect holiness in a future state.—These different views of the *future blessedness* sufficiently vindicate *our Lord* from the charge of *tautology*, though we should suppose (as, after all that Mr. Blair has said to the contrary, I think we must) that *our Lord* leads the minds of his disciples upwards in almost each of these *beatitudes*.

[h] *Happy are the pure in heart.*] Mr. Blair supposes this may refer to the expectation they had of possessing themselves of *beautiful captives* in those wars by which they fancied that the *Messiah's kingdom* would be raised and established. The large *seraglios* of eastern princes and great men which, by a very mistaken taste, were regarded as matters of state and grandeur, gave too much countenance to such a wild and extravagant notion: but as the hint is at most but obliquely intimated, I thought it convenient to touch upon it only in a very transient and general manner.

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source of nobler and more lasting pleasure; *for they shall see God*[j]; and thus purified and refined shall enjoy him in his ordinances now, and dwell with him for ever in heaven.

Mat. V. 8.

9 I come not, as you may fondly suppose, to lead you forward to the field of battle or to teach you to propagate religion by the sword; but, on the contrary, I declare unto you, *Happy are the peace-makers*, who not only avoid contention but labour to extinguish it wherever it prevails; *for* though mistaken men may ascribe such a gentle disposition to cowardice and meanness of spirit, *they shall* have the honour to *be called the children of* the *God* of peace[k], and be owned by him in that dear relation, as they resemble him in the benevolence of their characters.

9 Blessed *are* the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.

10 Instead of these pomps and pleasures, these victories and triumphs (in expectation of which you may now be crowding around me) my followers must prepare themselves for the severity of suffering: but *happy are they that are persecuted for the sake of righteousness*, and courageously endure the greatest extremities for the testimony of their consciences: their richest treasure is beyond the reach of their most inveterate enemies; *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, and they shall reign with God in everlasting glory.

10 Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 And, on these principles, *happy are ye*, my sincere disciples and faithful friends, *when men shall* injuriously *reproach you and persecute you, and shall falsely say every thing that is evil* and scandalous *of you for my sake*, and because of your professed relation to me. Be not discouraged under all this load of infamy and oppression; but rather *rejoice, and triumphantly exult*[l]; *because your reward in heaven* [*will be*] proportionably *great* and distinguished: *for* this has in all ages been the portion and the proof of the most eminent saints; and you particularly know

11 Blessed are ye when *men* shall revile you and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted

[j] *For they shall see God.*] Elsner has illustrated *this text* by shewing, that the Pagans thought a good man might *see their deities* in some circumstances, when to the wicked they were invisible. (*Elsn. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 22, 23.) But this, in *their theology*, might be intended to subserve some fraudulent views from which the nature of *Christianity* is most abhorrent. The remark, however, may in some degree shew how natural the thought is in the words before us.

[k] *The children of* the *God of* peace.] So God is often called, Rom. xvi. 20. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Phil. iv. 9. and Heb. xiii. 20. (Compare Ecclus. iv. 10.) *To be called God's children*, signifies to be really so, and to have a right to that name conferred upon us by a Divine adoption; see 1 John. iii. 1. and John i. 12.

[l] *Triumphantly exult.*] Of the emphatical signification of the word αγαλλιασθε, see *note* [f] on Luke i. 14, p. 32.

[m] *Thus*

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know from the sacred records, that it was *thus they persecuted the prophets* of their own nation [m], *who were* long *before you* the ambassadors from God to them; and as you now share in the tribulation of those holy men, you shall ere long share in their glory.

Mat. V. 12.

secuted they the prophets which were before you.

13 Let it be, in the mean time, your care to imitate their piety and zeal, as remembering that *you*, my disciples, *are* to be as it were *the salt of the earth*, the means of preventing or curing the growth of that corruption which prevails in it, and of seasoning men's minds with wisdom and grace: *but* it would be most unhappy for yourselves, as well as for them, if you should be destitute of those blessed principles; for *if the salt be grown insipid* [n], *with what can it* possibly *be seasoned? It is no farther of any avail* or significancy at all: *but*, as an useless thing, is left *to be thrown out of doors and to be trampled on by men* as the common dirt of the streets: thus worthless and contemptible will you, my disciples, be, even in the most eminent stations, if you lose your character for real and vital religion.

13 Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 And therefore, that this may not be the case with you, consider the distinguished circumstances in which you are placed: *you are*, like the sun, to be *the light of the world*; and how conspicuous and bright should you appear under that character! Even *a city that*, like yonder town, *is situated on a mountain* [o], *cannot be hid*, but will attract men's eyes from a considerable distance.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

[m] *Thus they persecuted the prophets* of their own nation.] This is abundantly evident from the known histories of Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, &c. See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16. Mat. xxiii. 29—35. Acts. vii. 51, 52. and Heb. xi. 36, 37.

[n] *If the salt be grown insipid.*] Mr. Le Clerc sinks the meaning of this noble passage very low, when he supposes *our Lord* only intends to compare *his disciples* to *salt ashes* used in manuring the ground, (see Luke xiv. 34, 35.) That passage, in which Livy calls Greece *Sal Gentium*, the *salt of all the nations*, on account of those intellectual improvements they learned from thence, might easily have suggested a much nobler sense, which the *paraphrase* expresses. The word μωρανθῇ has a peculiar beauty and strength here, and might literally be rendered, *if it be infatuated*, or *grown foolish*, alluding to the common *figure* in which sense and spirit are expressed by *salt*; but I thought the *metaphor* too strong to be literally retained in the *version*, and therefore contented myself with a distant imitation, as we call a flat lifeless discourse *insipid*. Compare Job vi. 6, and Col. iv. 6.

[o] *A city that*, like yonder town, *is situated on a mountain.*] Mr. Maundrel tells us that there is a city called Saphet, supposed to be the ancient Bethulia, which, standing on a high hill, might easily be seen from the *mountain* on which Christ made this discourse; and probably supposes he might point to that here, as afterwards he did to the *birds* and the *lilies*: Mat. vi. 26—28. *Maundr. Travels*, p. 115.) Many writers have justly observed, that *our Lord*, like Socrates, takes his *similies* from the most obvious things, familiarly known to his hearers, and often before their eyes, even while he was speaking; a thought most largely illustrated by *Sir Isaac Newton on the Prophecies*, p. 148, 149.

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distance. *Neither do men light* so much as *a* common *lamp, and put it under a bushel,* and conceal it there; *but* they rather set it *on a stand, and it giveth light to all that are in the house.* How much less will it become you, whom I have compared to the sun[p], to hide or to suppress your rays? On the contrary, *let* it be your care that *your light* may *so shine before men, that they may* continually *see your good works* in every circumstance and relation of life, *and* may thereby be engaged to *glorify your Father who is in heaven;* not only praising him for sending such a religion into the world, but also themselves embracing your faith and imitating your holy example.

Mat. V. 15.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel; but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

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Ver.

1, 2 WHAT abundant reason have we to bless God that this large and edifying discourse of our blessed Redeemer is thus particularly recorded by the sacred historian. Let every one *that hath ears to hear* attend to it; for surely *never man spake as our Lord* here *doth.* Let us fix our souls in a posture of humble attention, that we may 3--12 *receive the law from his mouth.*

He opened it with *blessings,* repeated and most important *blessings.* But on whom are they pronounced? and whom are we taught to think the *happiest* of mankind? The *meek* and the *humble,* the *penitent* and the *merciful,* the *peaceful* and the *pure,* those that *hunger and thirst after righteousness,* those that labour, but faint not under *persecution!* Blessed *Jesus!* how different are thy maxims from those of the children of this world! They call the proud *happy,* and admire the gay, the rich, the powerful and the victorious. But let a vain world take its gaudy trifles, and dress up the foolish creatures that pursue them. May our souls share in that *happiness* which the *Son of God* came to recommend and to procure! May we *obtain mercy* of the Lord; may we be owned as *his children;* may we *see his face;* and may we *inherit his kingdom!* With these enjoyments, and these hopes, we will cheerfully welcome the lowest or the most painful circumstances.

Let us awaken and stir up our souls to the cultivation of those amiable *virtues* which are here recommended to our pursuit; this *humility* and *meekness,* this *penitent sense* of sin, this ardent *desire after righteousness,* this *compassion* and *purity,* this *peacefulness* and *fortitude of soul,* and, in a word, this *universal goodness,* which becomes

[p] How much less will it become you, whom I have compared to the sun, &c.] That this is the sense and spirit of this beautiful passage Mr. Pierce has well shewn in his *fourth Dissertation.*

comes us as we sustain the character of *the salt of the earth* and *the light of the world.* SECT. XXXVII.

Is not there reason to lament it, that we answer the character no more? Is there not reason to cry out, with a good man in former times*, "Blessed *Jesus!* either these are not thy words, or we are not *Christians!*" Oh, season our hearts more effectually with thy *grace!* Pour forth that Divine *oil* on our lamps! Then shall the flame brighten; then shall the ancient honours of thy religion be revived; and multitudes be awakened and animated by the lustre of it *to glorify our Father in heaven.* Amen. Ver. 13, 14 16

* *Linacer.*

SECT. XXXVIII.

Our Lord declares his purpose of establishing and vindicating the moral law, and enters on his divine exposition of it. Mat. V. 17—26.

MAT. V. 17.

THINK not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

MAT. V. 17.

THAT the great design of our Lord's appearance might be more fully understood by the multitudes that were now assembled around him, he proceeded in his discourse and said, *Suppose not that I am come to dissolve* that goodly fabric of holy precepts contained in the sacred writings of *the laws, or the prophets;* for I solemnly assure you, That *I am not come to dissolve but* rather *to* vindicate and illustrate, to *complete* and adorn [*them*[a],] both by my example and discourses, as well as to answer the highest ends of the ceremonial institutions. *For verily I say unto you,* That as their original is Divine, their honours shall be perpetual; so that *till heaven and earth pass away,* and the whole visible frame of nature be disjointed, *not one jot or one tittle shall pass* SECT. XXXVIII. Mat. V. 17.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 18

[a] To vindicate and illustrate, to *complete* and adorn *them.*] I was willing to take the word πληρωσαι in its most extensive sense, as comprehending what Christ has done to answer the end of the *ceremonial law,* as well as to vindicate and enforce the *moral:* yet by the connection it seems that the *latter* was chiefly intended; and this phrase, *the law and the prophets,* is used in this sense, Mat. xxii. 40. It is strange that any should have questioned whether the *precepts of Moses* required such *spirituality* of obedience as Christ here demands. That great command of *loving the Lord God with all the heart,* &c. and *our neighbour as ourself,* (Mat. xxii. 37) must surely comprehend all this. I shall only add, that Vitringa's interpretation of πληροω, who supposes it here to answer to the Chaldee GEMAR, which signifies to *paraphrase, illustrate, open,* or *explain,* seems to me worthy of consideration. (Compare Rom. xv. 19. πεπληρωκεναι το ευαγγελιον, *I have fully explained the gospel;* and Col. iv. 12. πεπληρωμενοι εν θελημασι του Θεου, *completely instructed in the will of God.*) See *Vitring. Observ. Sacr.* lib. 1. dissert iii. cap. 5. §. 3.

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pass or perish *from the law*[b], *till all things* which it requires or foretells shall *be effected*[c]. *Whoever therefore shall* himself transgress or *violate one of the least of these commandments* which are contained therein; *and* especially, whoever *shall teach* other *men so* to do, whether by his licentious principles or irregular example, *he shall be accounted* [*one of*] *the least* and unworthiest members *in the kingdom of heaven*, or in the church of the Messiah; and shall soon be entirely cut off from it as unfit for so holy a society: *but whosoever shall do* them, *and teach* [*them*] with that advantage which nothing but the authority of a good example can give, *he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven* and be treated with distinguished honour and favour in proportion to his zeal in so good a cause. Let this therefore be the care of all that hear me this day: *for I say unto you*, with all the solemnity that so important an affair requires, *That unless your righteousness abound* far *more than* [*that*] which is apparent in the lives, or even required in the precepts *of the scribes and Pharisees*[d], as highly as they are generally esteemed, *ye shall* be so far from making any illustrious figure, that ye shall *not by any means enter into the kingdom of heaven*[e], or be owned by the Son of man as truly his subjects.

Mat. V. 19. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do, and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the *righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

To illustrate this, I will now proceed to explain some of those precepts of the law which these Pharisaical teachers have, by their perverse glosses,

[b] *One jot, or one tittle.*] The word ἰωτα, which we render *jot*, undoubtedly answers to the Hebrew letter *jod*, whence the English word here used seems to be derived, and which, being the *least letter* of their *alphabet*, might properly be used *proverbially* on this occasion.—Κεραια, which we render *tittle*, properly signifies one of those little ornamental *curvatures* or *flourishes* which, when Hebrew is elegantly written, are generally used at the beginning and end of a *letter*, and sometimes at the corners too.—I think it might well have been rendered, *not the least letter or stroke*, &c. and so much the rather, as *jot* and *tittle*, in English, signify much the the same.

[c] *Till all things* which it requires or foretells shall *be effected*: ἑως αν παντα γενηται.] The *translation* here given is most literal and comprehensive. The law *has its effect* when its *sanctions* are executed, as well as when its *precepts* are obeyed.

[d] Apparent in the lives, or even required in the precepts *of the scribes and Pharisees.*] As *our Lord* levels his following discourse, not so much against the corrupt *lives* of these Jewish *teachers*, as against their *doctrines*, I conclude that the text chiefly refers to the *latter*: yet since their *lives* were yet worse than their *maxims*, it must comprehend the *former*. They seem, (so far as we can judge by *this sermon*, and other *scriptures*) to have taught—that the *precepts of the law* extended only to the outward actions—that a zeal in the *ceremonial* parts of religion would excuse *moral* defects and irregularities—and that some important *privileges* were inseparably connected with a descent from Abraham, &c.

[e] *Ye shall not by any means enter into the kingdom of heaven.*] This must greatly surprise *Christ's hearers*, if the *proverb* which has since prevailed were of so ancient a date; for it has been commonly said by the Jews, that "if but *two men* were to enter into the kingdom of heaven, one of them would be a Pharisee and the other a scribe."

[f] *You*

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Mat. V. 21.

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment:

glosses, enervated and dishonoured; and I will begin with the sixth commandment. *You have heard that it was said to the ancients*[f], and particularly to your fathers at mount Sinai, *Thou shalt not kill*[g]: *and* you have been taught that the only design of it was to restrain men from actual murder; and accordingly it has been added, That *whosoever shall* unlawfully *kill* another, *shall be obnoxious to the judgment*[h], and be capitally punished in the common courts of judicature. *But I say unto you, That* it was the design of God in this precept to prohibit extravagant passions and abusive language, as well as the most fatal effects of them in destroying the lives of each other: so that *whosoever shall, without* just *cause*[i], *be angry with his brother*, so as secretly to wish him evil, *shall be obnoxious to the judgment*, or shall be liable to a worse punishment from God than any that your common courts of judicature can inflict[k]. *and whosoever* to his secret anger shall add opprobrious and contemptuous words; or, for instance, *shall say to his brother, Raca*, that is, Thou worthless empty fellow[l], *shall be* exposed to yet more terrible effects of the Divine resentment, and be *obnoxious to* a yet severer punishment, that will as far exceed the former as that inflicted by *the sanhedrim*, which extends to

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever 22

[f] *You have heard that it was said to the ancients.*] Thus are the words ἐρρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις, to be rendered; see *Grotius* and *Whitby in loc.*

[g] *Thou shalt not kill.*] I might have rendered, Οὐ φονεύσεις, *Thou shalt not commit murder*, as Dr. Scott has very properly done; but I chose to retain the words of the *commandments* as they are usually expressed among us, that it might at first hearing be more apparent to every reader, that what follows each, is *our Lord's commentary* upon it.

[h] *Shall be obnoxious to the judgment.*] To understand this and the following *verse*, it is necessary to observe, that the Jews had a common court of *twenty-three men*, wherein capital sentences might be passed, on which a malefactor might be *strangled* or *beheaded*; this was called *the judgment*: but the *sanhedrim*, or *council*, was the supreme Jewish *court*, consisting of *seventy-two*, in which the highest crimes were tried, which they, and they alone, punished with *stoning*, which was thought a more terrible death than the former. See *Grotius's* excellent *note* on this text, of which the best *commentaries* upon it since him are little more than transcripts. (See *Bishop Hopkins's Works*, p. 65, 66.) As *murder* was undoubtedly a capital crime, Dr. Lightfoot, and after him, Dr. Whitby must be mistaken in supposing that *judgment* here signifies *punishment from the* immediate *hand of God*, as in a case which *human laws* would not reach. See *Lightf. Hor. Heb.* and *Whitby*, on Mat. v. 22.

[i] *Without* just *cause.*] Though εἰκῆ, *without cause*, be wanting in some old *versions* and *manuscripts*, the sense plainly implies it. See Dr. *Whitby in loc.*

[k] To a worse punishment from God, &c.] That *judgment* must here signify *punishment from God*, is plain, because this *causeless anger* might be so concealed in the heart, as not to admit of conviction before men.

[l] *Raca*, that is, thou worthless empty fellow.] Drusius gives the most learned and accurate account of the etymology and import of this word, which seems pretty exactly to answer to COXCOMB in our language.

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to stoning, does that which follows on the judgment of the inferior courts, which only have the power of the sword, *but whosoever*, in his unreasonable passion, *shall* presume to *say* unto his brother, *Thou fool*, that is, Thou graceless wicked villain [m], thereby impeaching his moral character, as well as reflecting on his intellectual, *shall be obnoxious to the fire of hell*, or to a future punishment more dreadful even than that of being burnt alive in the valley of Hinnom [n], from whence you borrow the name of those infernal regions.

Mat. V. 22.

ever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.

23 Remember *therefore* to lay aside all your animosities, and to live in peace and love, as ever you would escape God's wrath and secure his favour. Without this your most expensive sacrifices would be so vain, that I must inculcate it on every one of you as a most necessary caution, *If thou art bringing thy gift*, however costly and free [o], even *to the* very *altar*, *and there recollectest that thy brother has any* just cause of [*complaint*] *against thee*, do not content thyself with a secret, and it may be a treacherous purpose, that thou wilt hereafter accommodate the affair, but bring it to an immediate issue;

23 Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24 And, *leaving thy gift there*, in the hand of those that are ministering *before the altar*, *go away*, *and*

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be

m *Thou fool*, that is, thou graceless wicked villain.] Mr. Blair thinks that μωρε, *thou fool*, answers to RAKEHELL; but that being only applied to a *debauchee*, seems too contracted. *Wicked men* are so often called *fools* in the Old Testament, especially in the writings of David and Solomon, that the appellation in the Jewish language, signifies not so much a weak thoughtless creature, as a man deliberately guilty of some heinous crime, or, in one word, a VILLAIN. On this account I cannot but think it wrong that ανοητοι Luke xxiv. 25, or αφρων, 1 Cor. xv. 36, should, by so harsh a *translation* as ours, have been confounded with such an infamous word as this.

n Burnt alive in the valley of Hinnom.] Though it is so well known to the *learned*, I must beg leave to remind my *English reader* that the *valley of Hinnom* or *Tophet* had been the scene of those detestable sacrifices in which children were *burnt alive* to Molech (compare 2 Kings xxiii. 10. 2 Chron. xxviii. 3. and Jer. xix. 2—5; xxxii. 35.) and was afterwards defiled by Josiah, 2 Kings xxiii. 10. and made a receptacle for the filth of the city, where fires were kept continually burning to consume it: and it is probable that if any criminals were executed on the statute, Lev. xx. 14. or xxi. 9. this accursed and horrible place might be the spot of ground on which they were consumed. However that were, it seemed, both with regard to its former and latter state, a fit *emblem* of *hell* itself (see Isa. xxx. 33. and Jer. xix. 11—13.) which, in the Syriac language, takes its name from thence, and was commonly called *Gehenna* by the Jews; (see *Lightf. Hor. Heb. in loc.* and *Preface* to his *Harm. of the New Test.*)—It must here signify a degree of *future punishment*, as much more dreadful than that incurred in the former case, as *burning alive* was more terrible than *stoning*: for I apprehend the *punishment* of each degree of *anger* and fury here mentioned is to be referred to the *invisible world* or else *our Lord's* words would not be generally true.

o *If thou art bringing thy gift*, however costly and free.] Δωρον, *a gift*, implies that it was a *free-will offering*; which adds great strength to the sentence, beyond what it would have had if the word had been θυσιαν, *sacrifice*.

be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

and first make it thy care to *be reconciled to thy brother*, by an acknowledgment of thy fault, and by a readiness to make him any reasonable satisfaction; *and then come and offer thy gift* [p], which thou mayest then cheerfully hope God will accept at thine hands. SECT. XXXVIII. Mat. V. 24.

25 Agree with thine adversary quickly whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

And it will be prudence as well as humanity to apply this advice to suits at law, if you are so unhappy as to be engaged in them: my counsel then to each of you is, That thou shouldest make it thine endeavour to *come to a friendly agreement with thine adversary* [q] *quickly, while thou art in the way* going *with him* to a magistrate; *lest the adversary* should *deliver thee to* be tried before *the judge; and the judge* deciding the cause against thee, *deliver thee to the officer* of the court, to keep thee in custody till payment be made; *and thou* not having enough by thee to discharge an account inflamed with so many additional articles of expence, shouldest *be cast into prison: Verily I say unto thee*, Thy antagonist, when he has got thee at such an advantage, will be more rigorous in his demands than before; and *thou shalt not by any means come out from thence, till thou hast discharged the very last farthing* of thy debt. And surely, if by impenitent wickedness thou makest thyself the prisoner of the Divine justice [r], thy case will be yet more deplorable and hopeless. 25 26

26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us seriously consider and often recollect the purposes of *Christ's* appearance: *he came not to destroy the law and the prophets*, Ver. 17

or

p *First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*] It is observable that *Philo (de Sacrif.* p. 844.) explaining the law of the *trespass-offering*, tells us, "That when a man had *injured his brother*, and repenting of his fault, *voluntarily acknowledged* it (in which case both *restitution* and *sacrifice* were required), he was first to *make restitution*, and then to come into the temple *presenting his sacrifice*, and asking pardon." This is a very just and a natural account of the matter, and adds a great illustration to *this text*, especially when it is considered that *our Lord* supposes in this case not *a trespass-offering* but *a voluntary gift* presented before the altar; and yet declares that this will not be accepted while there is a consciousness of having *wronged a brother* and *not made him reparation.*

q *Come to a friendly agreement with thine adversary.*] The word ἀντίδικος properly signifies a person who is *going to law* with another. I have rendered ἴσθι εὐνοῶν, *come to a friendly agreement*, because the *original* seems to imply not only *peace* but *benevolence.*

r If thou makest thyself the prisoner of the Divine justice.] This thought is a natural reflection on what was said before; but it is rather intimated than expressed in *our Lord's* words, which so naturally lead to the sense given in the *paraphrase*, that to those who are unacquainted with the Popish manner of managing controversies, it might seem surprising they should ever be urged in favour of *purgatory.* The vanity and inconsistency of it is well exposed by *Bishop Burnet on the Articles*, p. 169, and *Limborch, Theolog.* lib. vi. cap. 10. § 22.

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or to dissolve men's obligation to observe them: but rather to enforce as well as to fulfil them. How fatally shall we pervert the purposes of his coming, if we regard him as the *minister of sin?* How ungratefully shall we abuse the merciful constitution of his *gospel* should we take encouragement from thence to violate his *law?* Dangerous as well as ungrateful abuse indeed! For God's eye will be watchful over its honours, and his hand exerted to maintain them; so that *heaven and earth shall pass away* before it shall fail of its *accomplishment* in being either obeyed or avenged on the impenitent sinner. May it be our constant care to *keep* it ourselves, and to *teach* others to observe it! May we *teach* it by our lives as well as our lips; and let our daily conversation demonstrate how practicable and how amiable its precepts are! So shall we be *great in the kingdom of heaven*, in the pursuit of which we may give full scope to the noblest ambition of which human nature is capable.

Mat. V. 17. 18 19

Let our hearts own and feel the *spiritual* sense of *God's law*, that we may rise to a more sincere and more extensive *righteousness* than that of the *scribes* and *Pharisees*. May we *delight in it after the inward man*, and learn to regulate our thoughts and our passions, as well as our external behaviour, by it!

20

Especially let us avoid all the malignant and ill-natured *passions*, all thoughts of rash and immoderate *anger*, all words of contumely and *reproach*. If we would maintain communion with the *God of love*, let love govern in our hearts; and when we come to present our devotions to him, let us *lift up holy hands without wrath*, as well as *without doubting* (1 *Tim.* ii. 8.) so may we promise ourselves a gracious welcome; so shall we carry away the most valuable blessings!

21, 22 23

But are none of us strangers to this blessed state? Are none of us obnoxious to the Divine displeasure? If we are so, with what a holy solicitude of soul should we labour, to make up the *controversy* and *come to an agreement*, *while we are* yet *in the way* with this awful *adversary!* lest we be immediately hurried before the tribunal of the *righteous Judge of all the world*, and *be delivered* into the hands of justice, to be *reserved in everlasting chains* beyond the possibility of redemption.

25

Lord, we were all the *debtors*, and, in one sense, the *prisoners* of thy justice; and of ourselves we are most incapable, not only of *paying the uttermost farthing*, but even of discharging the least part of the debt! We bless thee for that generous *Surety* who has undertaken and discharged it for us; and by the price of whose atoning blood we are *delivered* from the *chains of darkness*, and are *translated into the glorious liberty of thy children.*

26

SECT.

SECT. XXXIX.

Our Lord proceeds in his exposition of the law, strictly prohibiting uncleanness, divorce, contention, and revenge; and urging the contrary virtues. Mat. V. 27, *to the end.*

MAT. V. 27.

YE have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

MAT. V. 27.

JESUS proceeded in his sermon to the seventh commandment, and observed, *You have* often *heard that it was said to the ancients, Thou shalt not commit adultery;* and that law has been explained as if it related only to the grossest acts of uncleanness: *But I say unto you, That* it extends not only to unchaste actions and words, but even to looks and the very thoughts of the heart; for *whosoever shall gaze on a woman*[a] *to lust after her,* and thus cherish and indulge the secret workings of irregular desire in his mind, *has already committed* that *adultery with her in his heart*[b] which this commandment was designed to forbid, and thereby rendered himself, in the sight of God, guilty of the breach of it.

SECT. XXXIX. Mat. V. 27.

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

You will think me severe in requiring you so strictly to mortify all the irregular propensities of nature, but you will find it, on the whole, as much for your interest as it is to part with a gangrened member to prevent the death of the whole body; yea indeed it is infinitely more so. *And if,* therefore, *thy right eye offend* or ensnare *thee*[c], or any thing dear as thy right eye would be the necessary occasion of leading thee into sin, *pluck it out* with inexorable resolution, *and cast it* far *from thee* with abhorrence: *for it is advantageous to thee, that one of thy members should perish, rather than thy whole body should be thrown*

28 29

[a] *Whosoever shall gaze on a woman:* ὁ βλεπων γυναικα.] There are several other places where the word βλεπω signifies *to look* on an object *with great attention,* or to *fix the eye* upon it. See Mat. vii. 3. xviii. 10. Luke vii. 44. viii. 18. Acts i. 9. iii. 4. 1 Cor. iii. 10. x. 12. Phil. iii. 2. and Rev. xvii. 8.

[b] *Committed adultery with her in his heart.*] In the first edition I had rendered it *debauched her,* because it is plain μοιχευσαι must extend to single as well as married persons; but, on the animadversion of a learned friend, I am convinced that the spirit of our Lord's meaning is best expressed by retaining the word used in the *seventh commandment,* and giving the passage such a turn as I have now given it in the *paraphrase,* which does not at all limit the sense. But to render γυναικα a *married woman,* would be a limitation, I think, not to be justified.

[c] *Offend* or ensnare *thee.*] It is well known that this is the force of the word σκανδαλιζω, which most literally signifies to be a *stumbling-block* in a person's way, or an *occasion of his fall;* and so implies much more than merely to displease. I mention this remark, obvious as it is, because the sense of so many texts depends on attending to it. See Rom. xi. 9. xiv. 13, 21. xvi. 17. 1 Cor. viii. 13. Gal. v. 11. and Rev. ii. 14.

[d] *If*

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thrown into hell; which yet must be the fatal consequence of indulging the most favourite lust. *Yea, if thy right hand offend* or insnare *thee*[d], though it be so useful and necessary a part, do not spare it, but immediately *cut it off, and cast it from thee; for* I renew the declaration, That *it is* highly *advantageous to thee, that* any *one of thy members should perish, rather than thy whole body should be thrown into hell*[e], to be the companion of thy guilty soul there in everlasting horror and misery.

Mat. V. 30.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

31 *It has been said,* (Deut. xxiv. 1.) *Whoever would dismiss his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce:* and this precept, which was indeed intended to prevent the frequency of such dismissions, by making it so solemn and irrevocable a thing, has perversely been interpreted as a warrant for having recourse to it upon every trifling occasion. *But* such a practice is directly contrary to the original design of marriage, and highly injurious to the common good of mankind: *I* therefore think it necessary to restrain so dangerous a liberty, and *say unto you, That whosoever shall dismiss his wife, except* it be *on the account of whoredom*[f], *causeth her,* by a second marriage, *to commit adultery,* or at least exposeth her to great danger of doing it; *and whoever shall marry her that is* thus unlawfully *dismissed*[g], *committeth adultery,* since the bond of the former marriage does in the account of God remain undissolved.

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.

32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.

33 *Again, you have heard that it was said to the ancients,* (Lev. xix. 12. Deut. xxiii. 21.) *Thou shalt not perjure* or forswear *thyself, but shalt* diligently *perform unto the Lord thine oaths* and vows: and this has been expounded as extending

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.

[d] *If thy right hand offend* or ensnare *thee.*] The greatest part of *Christ's auditors* were poor people who lived by their daily labour; and to these the loss of a *right hand* would be a much greater calamity than that of a *right eye:* so that there is a *gradation* and force in this passage beyond what has generally been observed.

[e] *Rather than thy whole body should be thrown into hell.*] This plainly implied the doctrine of a *resurrection,* though Christ had not yet expressly taught it.

[f] *On the account of whoredom.*] It is very evident that πορνεια, as here used, must have a more ambiguous and larger sense than the English word *fornication,* which generally answers to it; and must be understood here of *adultery.*

[g] *Shall marry her that is* unlawfully *dismissed.*] *Mr. Blair* (in the *third volume* of his *Sermons,* p. 111, 112.) explains this clause as intended to forbid women *divorced for adultery* to *marry,* which he thinks an additional punishment inflicted on persons guilty of so enormous a crime, and a wise provision for preventing bad women from committing adultery in hopes of opening their way to another more agreeable marriage. But I prefer the sense here given, because it makes this latter clause more correspondent to the former, and prevents the necessity of supposing μοιχευω to be used in two different senses so near together.

[h] *Swear*

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Mat. V. 33.

ing merely to those oaths in which the name of God is expressly used, and only prohibiting the violation of such, but tolerating the use of them, even on slight occasions, so it be not in confirmation of a falsehood. *But I say unto* 34 *you, Swear not at all* in your common discourse with each other[h], even so much as by the creatures; *either by heaven*[i], *for it is the throne of* the glorious and holy *God; Or by the earth,* 35 *for it is* under his dominion, and subject to him as *his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King* of Israel and of the universe: *Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou* art 36 so far from having an absolute power over it, that thou *canst not make* the colour of *one hair* of it *white or black:* so that these oaths by the creatures, if they have any sense at all, are an implicit appeal to God. *But* I charge you to 37 avoid the customary use of all such oaths, as well as of those in which the name of God is directly expressed; and *let your conversation be* all plain and simple: when you affirm, say, *Yes, yes;* and when you deny, *No, no; for* if you conduct yourselves as you ought, this will be sufficient to gain you credit; and you may be assured that *whatever is more than these cometh from the evil one*[k], who artfully contrives, by the habitual use of swearing even by the creatures, to lessen your

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;

35 Nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King:

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 But let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever *is* more than these, cometh of evil.

[h] *Swear not at all* in your common discourse with each other.] The opposition between this *verse* and the 37*th* limits the prohibition to this sense; and, waving that, it would be necessary to interpret it as a restrictive rather than an universal precept, and to consider it as more particularly levelled at the common practice of the Jews, who reckoned *swearing by the creatures* to be far more excusable than *swearing by the name of God,* and made but little scruple of the frequent use of it. For that *all swearing* is not here condemned as a thing absolutely evil, is fully evident from other passages of scripture, and of necessity must be allowed to vindicate the conduct of Christ and his apostles. Compare Mark viii. 12. Mat. xxvi. 64. Rom. i. 9. ix. 1. Gal. i. 20. 2 Cor. i. 18. and Heb. vi. 16.

[i] *Either by heaven.*] Though I allow, with the learned Heinsius, that the words μη ομοσαι ολως may be rendered *By no means swear, either by heaven, earth,* or the like; yet it will not follow that the words only forbid *swearing by creatures,* since ver. 37. forbids *whatever is more than yea or nay.* So that it is absolutely necessary to have recourse to some other solution of this *prohibition,* as well as of that in Jam. v. 12. where *any other oath* is forbidden; and nothing is more natural and easy than to understand it in both places as a prohibition of the use of *oaths* in common conversation.

[k] *Cometh from the evil one.*] Εκ του πονηρου εστιν will properly bear *this version;* and some copies read διαβολου. *cometh from the devil.* I would observe that whether *this version* or the *common one* be admitted, the clause before us contains a demonstration that ver. 34. is to be explained with the limitation proposed: for it is evident that *oaths* were in some cases not only allowed, but required by the *Mosaic law;* (see Exod. xxii. 11. Lev. v. 1. Numb. v. 19—21. and Deut. xxix. 12—17.) So that if Christ's prohibition had here referred to *swearing* in *solemn and judicial* cases, he would in these words have charged the *Divine law* with establishing an immorality, which it is most absurd to suppose; and I cannot but wonder that so obvious and decisive a thought should not have been more insisted upon in this controversy.

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your reverence for the solemnity of an oath and to lead you at length to take the name of God in vain, even by perjury itself.

Mat. V. 38. *You have heard that it has been said* in the law (Deut. xix. 21.) *An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:* and this statute, which was only intended to direct judges as to the penalties to be inflicted in case of violent and barbarous assaults, has been interpreted as encouraging a rigorous severe revenge of every injury a man might receive. *But I say unto you, That* when you meet with ill usage in the world, *you do not* immediately *set yourselves against the injurious person*[l] in a posture of hostile opposition, and with a resolution to return evil for evil; *but,* where the damage is not great, chuse rather to pass it by, though possibly it might on that account be repeated, than to enter into a rigorous prosecution of the offender. On these principles, *if any man strike thee on thy right cheek,* patiently *turn the other to him also*[m]. *And if any one be resolved to sue thee at law, and take away thy vest, permit him to take thy mantle too*[n]; for the loss of both would be but a trifle in comparison of those vexations, snares and expences, which would probably attend the continuance of the suit. *And if any press thee to go* with him *one mile,* obliging thee and thy carriages to attend him on a public account[o], rather *go with him*

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloak also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

l *Do not set yourselves against the injurious person.*] So the phrase ανθιστηναι τω πονηρω may exactly be rendered; (compare 2 Tim. iii. 8.) Had our Lord meant to intimate that we should rather suffer ourselves to be murdered, and our families to be ruined, than resist the villain that attempts it, he would have laid down so strange a precept in the strongest terms: and it is very unreasonable to infer it from this passage, which speaks of so trifling an injury as a *slap on the face,* or suing a man for the value of a *waistcoat* or *cloak.*—if it be asked whether we are universally forbidden to resist on these occasions? I answer we are; unless we be in our consciences convinced, that in present circumstances, to stand on our defence will be more for the public good; and in those cases this particular precept is superseded by the general law of universal benevolence. But I apprehend these expressions intimate that, on the whole, it will generally be for the best to wave rigorous prosecutions on such slight occasions.

m *Turn the other to him also.*] This is a proverbial phrase, to express a *meek submission* to injuries and affronts. See Isa. l. 6. and Lam. iii. 30.

n *Thy mantle too.*] *Vest* and *mantle* more exactly answer to χιτων and ιματιον than *coat* and *cloak* (compare John xix. 23. and see *Casaubon in loc.*) and are parts of dress, under different names still retained in Barbary, Egypt and the Levant. See *Dr. Shaw's Travels,* p. 289–292. The *mantle* being much larger than the *vest,* must probably be more valuable; and as it would be natural for a robber on the highway to take the *outer garment* first, I look on this manner of expressing it as a good argument for retaining *our translation* of κριθηναι, and rendering it *sue thee at law,* rather than take it in a more general way as signifying to *strive* or *contend;* though I know it has sometimes this last signification, as *Lud. Cappellus* urges.

o *Press thee to go* with him, &c.] The word *press* seems best to answer the original αγγαρευσει, which is well known to be

him two more, than disturb the peace by a forcible opposition; for in many such cases as these it will be more for your own comfort, as well as the credit of your profession, to submit than contend.

42 Give to him that asketh thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.

When thou seest any one in real necessity, and hast it in the power of thine hand to do it, *give to him that asketh thee* thy charity [p]; *and do not turn away*, with a severe denial, *him that would borrow of thee* [q]; for in some cases a seasonable loan may be as valuable a kindness as a gift. 42

43 You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy:

By such condescensions and favours you will generally gain the friendship of those with whom you converse; but if any should be so base, as, notwithstanding all, to persist in using you ill, do not indulge to sentiments of revenge. I know *you have heard that it was said* to our fathers, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour*, (Lev. xix. 18.) *and* from thence, though in direct contradiction to many other scriptures, (Exod. xxiii. 4, 5. Lev. xix. 17. and Prov. xxv. 21.) some have argued as if it had been added, Thou *shalt hate thine enemy;* and the precepts for destroying the Canaanites (Deut. vii. 16, and the like), have been abused to countenance such an addition [r]. 43

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse

But instead of favouring this pernicious maxim, *I say unto you, Love your enemies*, and whatsoever you may suffer by them, while you abhor their sinful practices, shew a concern for the true welfare 44

be derived from the name of those officers who were commissioned for this purpose by the Persian emperors when Judea was one of their provinces. See *Drusius in loc.* (Compare Mat. xxvii. 32.) Among the Jews the disciples of their wise men were excused from such services; but Christ advises his disciples not to insist on that exemption. See *Lightf. Hor. Heb. in loc.*

p *Give to him that asketh thee* thy charity, τω αἰτουντι σε δος.] Mr. Blair would refer this to ποιειν, in ver. 39, and render it, *Give to the injurious person what he asketh thee;* and has a very beautiful discourse upon it in that view: but it is plainly unnecessary to limit it; and I think that, on this interpretation, it would too much coincide with verse 44. In whatever sense it be taken, it must admit of some exceptions, or it will not only be inconsistent with such precepts as require us to take care of our families, (as 1 Tim. v. 8.) but with natural justice and common sense. It is amazing, therefore, that any who do not think themselves obliged by the literal sense of this precept, to *give* or *lend* to every idle importunate creature whatever he asks, should insist on a rigorous interpretation of the preceding passage, from ver. 34 to 41.

q *Do not turn away him that would borrow of thee.*] Τον θελοντα απο σου δανισασθαι μη αποστραφης, is thus most literally rendered.

r The precepts for destroying the Canaanites have been abused, &c.] These precepts were of a peculiar nature; and that in particular, Deut. xxiii. 6. *Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever*, relates to avoiding throughout all generations any association with the Moabites; which was an everlasting *brand of infamy* set upon them for the affront, which, *in the matter of Peor*, they had offered to God himself, under whose conduct the Israelites were. But though it forbids any *national alliance* with them, it seems that the settlement of Ruth in Israel when she embraced the Jewish religion (Ruth i. 16.) and the permission given to the Moabites to live as tributaries under David after the conquest of their country, (2 Sam. viii. 2.) were not at all inconsistent with this law.

SECT. XXXIX.

welfare of their persons; *bless them that* in the bitterest manner *curse you* (whether by prophane execrations in their common discourse, or by unjust anathemas in their ecclesiastical assemblies) be ready to *do good to them that hate you; and pray for* the conversion of *them that insult you*[s],

Mat. V. 44.

curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45 *and persecute you: That you may* thus approve yourselves to *be the children of your heavenly Father; for*, with the most diffusive kindness and beneficence, *he causeth his sun to arise on the evil and on the good, and showereth down rain on the just and the unjust*; so that his enemies share in his providential bounties and subsist on his daily care.

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which *is* in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 Let it be therefore your concern to imitate this extensive goodness: *for if you* only *love them that love you, what reward have ye?* or what extraordinary praise can ye expect? *Do not even the* most infamous and scandalous sinners, such

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?

47 as the very *publicans, do the same? And if ye salute* and embrace *your brethren only*[t], or those of the same sect, party and interest with yourselves, *what extraordinary thing do you* practise more than the rest of mankind, though your advantages are so much greater than theirs? *Do not even the* heathens and *publicans do so?* And will not common humanity teach even the very worst of men civility to those that treat them with respect and excite them to some sentiments of gratitude to their friends and benefactors?

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others?* Do not even the publicans so?

48 You, who stand in so near a relation to God as my professed disciples, should far excel them: *Be ye therefore*, in these instances of undeserved and forfeited goodness[u], and, in all other respects, as

48 Be ye therefore perfect,

[s] *That insult you*; επηρεαζοντων υμας.] As this word, according to the judgment of Erasmus, Beza and several other able critics, is derived from Αρης, the name of Mars, it may perhaps strictly answer to *dragooning* in our modern language: but as it is plainly used by St. Peter to express *abusive language* (1 Pet iii. 16.) I chose to render it *insult*, which may be applied either to *injurious words* or *actions*. To *traduce* does by no means express the force of the idea. Nor can I think, with the learned Elsner (Vol. I. p. 30, 31.) that this clause is to be interpreted chiefly of malicious prosecutions in judicial courts, though that be a sort of *insult* and *persecution*, undoubtedly comprehended among many others, and often expressed by the Greek words here used.

[t] *If ye salute* and embrace *your brethren only.*] The word ασπασησθε alludes to the custom of *saluting by embracing*. And when Christ cautions against confining their regards to brethren, he may perhaps obliquely glance at those prejudices which different *sects* had against each other, and intimate that he would not have his followers imbibe that *narrow spirit*. Would to God the hint had been more attended to among the unhappy *subdivisions* into which his church has been crumbled; and that we might at least advance so far as cordially to embrace our *brethren in Christ*, of whatever party or denomination they are!

[u] In these instances of undeserved and forfeited goodness.] The *love to friends*, enjoined by the scribes and Pharisees, was very

perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

as far as frail mortality will admit, *perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect* [x]; whose name you will most effectually honour, and whose favour you will most happily secure by a care to imitate him to the utmost in all the moral perfections of his nature. (Compare Eph. iv. 31, 32. v. 1.)

SECT. XXXIX. Mat. V. 48.

IMPROVEMENT.

ALAS! how may we blush to call God *our Father*, while we resemble him so little! And what reason is there, on a survey of these directions of *our Lord*, to acknowledge our deficiencies and our faults! Let us review the many advantages we enjoy, as *Christians*, and the engagements we are under in the particular circumstances in which Divine Providence has placed us; and blush to think that *we do* so little *more than others*, perhaps in many instances falling short even of the virtues of *heathens*. Ver. 48 46

Let us particularly be instructed by these lessons of our Divine Master to recompense *good for evil:* lessons which come with peculiar grace from his mouth, as he was himself the kindest *friend* to his most inveterate *enemies*, and bore and forgave more than any but himself could possibly do. 43, 45

Let us, who are his *disciples*, abhor *contention* and *revenge*. Let us not prosecute every little *injury* to the utmost, nor govern ourselves by those false maxims of prudence and honour, which pride and self-love have introduced on the ruins of real *Christianity*. Let us not, even in the most legal methods, seek the punishment of those who have *wronged us*, except in circumstances in which we are in our conscience persuaded it will, on the whole, be greater 38, 42

very imperfect: we are to labour after a more complete resemblance to God, in *loving enemies*. *Our Lord* therefore afterwards expressed it in a parallel discourse, by saying, *Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful*, Luke vi. 36. but it is probable he used a greater latitude of expression here, to remind us of our obligations to imitate the Divine Being in all his moral perfections.

x *Perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.*] Many authorities are produced by *Elsner*, in his note on this text, to prove not only that the heathens gave the epithet of τελειος, or *perfect*, to many of their *gods*, especially the chief; but that some of their writers describe *clemency* and *goodness to enemies*, as a virtue by which mortals make the nearest approach to Divine perfection. These words conclude Christ's excellent vindication of the law from the corrupt glosses of the Jewish teachers. I know it has been objected to it, that, considering the many figurative expressions used in it, we might as easily trace out the duties recommended by the *light of reason* alone, as adjust the sense of such obscure and hyperbolical precepts. But if it were really so (which I cannot grant), it is to be remembered, that the chief design of the gospel is not to inform us what is *justice*, *humanity*, and *charity*, in particular cases (which a view of present circumstances can alone discover) but to awaken a regard to the known, though neglected dictates of *natural religion* on these heads; and this may be most effectually done by such animated and sprightly exhortations as these, especially when considered as coming from a Person whose authority and love concur to demand our attention and obedience.

SECT. XXXIX. greater *charity* to animadvert on the offence than to pass it by; and even then let us act in a calm and dispassionate manner, pitying and loving the persons of the *injurious*, even while, for the sake of society, we prosecute their crimes.

46 If this be our duty towards our *enemies*, how inexcusable are we if we are cold and insensible to our *friends!* And how much worse than *publicans* themselves, if we do not *love them that love us*, and *do good* to those from whom we have *received* it. Happy is that *Christian* to whom the God of nature hath given a heart so turned to sentiments of benevolence that, in all these instances, *love* is *a law unto itself!*

Yet let us remember, that the whole of our duty is not comprehended in these *social regards*. The great Author of our being, who hath endowed us with rational faculties, justly requires that we assert their empire over the meaner powers of appetite and passion. We see that he forbids not only gross enormities, as Ver. 27, 28 *adultery* (which, though so unaccountably spared by the laws of many *Christian* countries, the *heathens* themselves have condemned as a capital crime, and which some of the most barbarous nations have esteemed infamous,) but the *unchastity* of *the eye* and of *the heart*. Let us then earnestly pray that God would *create in us a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us* (Psal. li. 10.) and let 29 us maintain a most resolute guard over our senses and our thoughts, remembering that there is no other alternative, but that the *dearest* of our *lusts* must be *mortified* and subdued, or our *whole persons be cast into hell.*

30 Elevate our affections, O Lord, to nobler objects than those which are suited merely to animal nature! Teach us to *keep under the body, and bring it into subjection* (1 Cor. ix. 27.) that we may not finally *be cast away* from thy presence, and fall into that dreadful state where every drop of sinful pleasure will be recompensed with full vials of misery and despair!

SECT. XL.

Our Lord having thus vindicated the Mosaic law, proceeds, in his divine discourse on the mount, to caution his disciples against vain-glory in alms-deeds, prayer and fasting. Mat. VI. 1—18.

MAT. VI. 1.

SECT. XL. OUR Lord proceeding in his discourse to caution them against vain-glory, said unto Mat. VI. 1. them, *Take heed* in general, *that you practise not your righteousness*[a], or perform not any religious

MAT. VI. 1. TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before

[a] *Practise not your righteousness.*] As some copies, and very ancient versions read δικαιοσυνην, *righteousness*, instead of ελεημοσυνην, *alms-deeds*, and several of the fathers

SECT. IX.

Mat. VI. 1.

before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

religious action, in an ostentatious manner *before men*, making it your chief end *to be viewed* and admired *by them:* or *otherwise* if this caution be neglected, *you* will *have no reward from your heavenly Father*, who knows all the secret principles of your heart, and indispensably requires the greatest uprightness and sincerity there.

2. Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men: verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

2 The caution is so important that I shall illustrate it in various particulars. *When therefore*, for instance, *thou performest* [*thine*] *alms-deeds, do not*, as it were, *sound a trumpet before thee*, and make proclamation to all around to induce them to take notice of it; *as* it is customary for *the hypocrites* to *do in the public assemblies* [b], *and in the streets, that* acting their part as on an open theatre [c], *they may be applauded of men* who are the spectators of their liberality: *verily I say unto you*, That in this empty sound of human praise, *they have their* poor *reward* [d], and must expect no acceptance and recompence from God.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

3 *But when thou art doing* [*thine*] *alms*, use the utmost privacy; and, if it be possible, *let not thy left hand know what thy right hand is doing* [e], when it is stretched out to these charitable purposes;

fathers quote it so, I chuse, with Beza, to follow that reading; because it prevents the appearance of a *tautology* in the following words, and makes this verse a general and very proper introduction to the remaining part of the section, in which the caution is branched out into the particular heads of *alms*, *prayer*, and *fasting*. (See Dr. *Mill. in loc.*)—Nevertheless I by no means insist on the change: but if it be admitted, I cannot acquiesce in the criticism of a learned friend, who would explain *righteousness* as here signifying *charity*, or *liberality*; because, though I am well aware it has that signification sometimes (I think not so often as some have supposed,) yet admitting it here would destroy that beautiful variety between this and the following verse, which I have endeavoured to illustrate in the *paraphrase*, and which makes it so proper an introduction to this part of our Lord's sermon.

[b] *In the public assemblies.*] It is certain that the word συναγωγη may be taken in this extent; and though it is most probable it may even here refer to *religious assemblies*, yet we may recollect on this occasion that it is a known custom in the eastern nations to distribute alms when they are going to enter on public councils.—The phrase of *sounding a trumpet before them* seems only a figurative expression to represent their doing it in a noisy ostentatious way; as it is certain that to do a thing *with the sound of a trumpet* is sometimes used proverbially to express a public ostentation. See *Elsner in loc.*

[c] Acting their part as on an open theatre.] Erasmus and Beza very justly observe that θεαθηναι in the *verse before* is a *theatrical* word; and υποκριται is well known to signify *players disguised* (as the *Grecian actors* used to be) *in masks;* not to say that the *sounding of a trumpet* may allude to the *music* of the stage. I have endeavoured to express this in the phrases here used in the *paraphrase*.

[d] *They have their reward.*] Sir Norton Knatchbull earnestly contends that απεχουσι τον μισθον αυτων ought to be rendered *they fall short of their reward:* but the word απεχω is plainly used in the sense in which our *translators* take it, Luke vi. 24. Philip. iv. 18. and Philemon. ver. 15. and it is with peculiar propriety that *human applause* is here called *their reward*, as being that which they chuse and seek. See *Beza's* elegant *note* on the words.

[e] *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand is doing.*] It is said that the *poor's chest* stood on the *right hand* as they entered the *synagogues*, to which some suppose the words to allude. It is plainly a *proverbial* expression of strict care to conceal an action.

[f] Contrive

SECT. XI.

poses; and far from publishing it with vain affectation, conceal it, as far as may be, from thy nearest friends: *That thine alms may be* performed *in secret; and thy Father who sees in secret*, and knows every circumstance of your most retired actions, *will himself* be ready to honour and *reward thee* another day, and, that *openly*, before the assembled world.

Mat. VI. 4.

4 That thine alms may be in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.

5 *And*, again, *when thou prayest* (as, if thou art my disciple indeed, thou often wilt,) *thou shalt not be as the hypocrites*, who discover on all occasions the vanity of their hearts; *for* even when performing their particular, and those that ought to be their secret devotions, *they love to pray standing in the public assemblies* in sight of numbers of people, *and* fixing them exactly to one constant hour, contrive to be catched, as it were, just at that sacred time[f]; not only in the common places of resort, but *in the corners of the streets*, where several ways meet; *that they may* thus *be* sure of being *viewed by* a great number of beholders: but howsoever, upon this account, they may indeed be admired of *men*, as persons of singular piety, yet *verily I say unto you, That* in this admiration of those that observe them *they have* all *their reward*.

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are;* for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men: verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6 *But thou*, O my disciple, whoever thou art, *when thou prayest*, and dost not intend it as a social exercise of devotion, withdraw from the sight and intercourse of men, and *enter into thy closet*, or any other retired apartment[g]; *and having shut thy door*, to prevent interruption, and exclude spectators, *pray* with a holy freedom of soul *to thy Father who is* with thee *in secret; and thy Father, who* always *sees in secret* as distinctly as in the most open scene of action *will* regard these addresses with peculiar pleasure, as the emotions of a pious and sincere heart; and will another

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

[f] Contrive to be catched at that sacred time.] Thus the late pious and eloquent Mr. Grove explains and finely illustrates this text in his *Discourse on Secret Prayer*, p. 3, 4. It is plain this custom still prevails among the *Mahometans;* as *Pfeiffer* has observed, *Theolog. Mohammed. Oper.* p. 848—974. and *Bohovius* in his *Turkish Liturgy*, § 1. See a remarkable illustration of it in *Mr. Addison's Freeholder*, No. 59.

[g] *Enter into thy closet*, or any other retired apartment.] Ταμιειον signifies *closet, chamber, wardrobe, warehouse*, or any other separate place; and Mr. Blair piously conjectures that Christ might use a word of such latitude that none might omit *secret prayer* for want of so convenient an apartment as they could wish to retire into. It will, I hope, be observed that many remarks of this kind proceed on a supposition that the Spirit of God directed the apostles in their writings to chuse such *Greek words* as most exactly corresponded to those in the Jewish language which Christ used.

h *Do*

another day *reward thee openly* for these duties which were so entirely referred to the views of honouring and pleasing him. SECT. XI.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

But when you pray, do not use a vain multiplicity of words[h], *as* it is usual for *the heathens* to *do* in the invocation of their deities; *for they* foolishly *think they shall be heard* in their addresses to them *for their speaking much.* Mat. VI. 7.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

Be not ye therefore in this respect *like them*, since you are so much better instructed in the Divine nature than they, and cannot but know that your prayers are intended to affect your own hearts that they may be fit to receive blessings, and not to inform or work upon the heart of God: *for your* heavenly *Father* is ready to bestow his blessings on you, and always *knows what you* really *want*, even *before you ask him*; which therefore should teach you to avoid whatever may look like prescribing to him, by too minute and repeated a detail of particulars. 8

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;

Thus therefore pray ye, or to this effect at least, and in this plain, concise and humble manner, if not in these very words: "*Our Father, who art* seated on a throne of glory *in* the highest *heaven*; while we bow before thine awful presence with the humblest reverence, we would nevertheless approach thee with filial confidence, as our bountiful and compassionate Parent; uniting our supplications to thee with hearts full of brotherly love, and asking for each other the blessings we seek for ourselves. We would so remember our relation to thee as to be above all things concerned for thy glory; and therefore make it our first petition, *May thy* illustrious *name be sanctified!* May the whole race of mankind, yea, the whole world of intelligent creatures pay their dutiful veneration to thy Divine Majesty[i] which thy matchless perfections so justly require! And for this purpose, 9

10 Thy kingdom come:

10

[h] *Do not use a vain multiplicity of words, μη βαττολογησητε.*] Beza has well explained the *etymology* of the word; and Dr. Hammond shews how applicable it was to the devotion of the Gentiles, (Compare 1 Kings xviii. 26. and Acts xix. 34.) It is plain that the Jews were running into the same fault, if we may judge by their oldest *Liturgies*. (See *Le Clerc, in loc.* and *Selden, de Synedr.* lib. i. cap. xii. p. 467, & *seq.*) And Dr. Wotton has illustrated the text so well, if it be considered as referring to them, that one could wish he had produced some better authorities than he has done for reading *υποκρίται* rather than *εθνικοι*. See *Wot. Misc.* Vol. I. p. 186—188.

[i] That dutiful veneration to thy Divine Majesty] The *name* of God seems a phrase nearly answering to that of *majesty* when applied to an earthly sovereign; as Mr. Blair has justly observed. *Serm.* Vol. IV. p. 42.

SECT. XI.

pose, *may* that *thy kingdom*, which thou art now introducing among men, more perfectly *come*[k]; may it be established with greater efficacy, be more clearly discovered, and more resolutely pursued! *May thy will*, always wise and always gracious, *be done, as in heaven, so likewise upon earth*; and may we mortals be taught to regard it with a resignation, acquiescence and obedience[l], resembling that of the heavenly spirits! And as for ourselves, O Lord, we would not seek the great things of life, we would not be anxious about its distant futurities, but humbly entreat thou wouldest open that bountiful hand on which we continually depend, and wouldest *give us this day our daily bread*[m], providing a competent supply for our present necessities, and teaching us to refer the rest to thy continual paternal care! *And* though we have in many respects been disobedient and ungrateful children, yet we beseech thee, O most compassionate Father, to *forgive us our* offences, whereby we stand chargeable, as it were, in thy book, with *debts* which we can never clear: yet do thou freely forgive them all, *as we also* desire to *forgive our debtors*, even all that have in any respect offended and injured us: yea, such pardon may we receive from thee, our God, as we are willing to impart to them! *And do not bring us into* circumstances of pressing *temptation*, lest our virtue should be vanquished and our

Mat. VI. 10.

11

12

13

come: thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven:

11 Give us this day our daily bread:

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors:

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for

[k] More perfectly *come*.] It is reasonable to believe *this petition* had a sense peculiar to the period in which it was prescribed, and that we under this perfect revelation of the gospel cannot properly use it precisely with the same meaning: but so extensive a *phrase* may justly admit of other senses, at least by *accommodation*, as the Assembly's Catechism, with great propriety, illustrates it; and I believe there are few who decline the use of *this prayer* on this account, who do not often use *scripture phrases* with a much greater latitude.

[l] Resignation, acquiescence and obedience.] I have here joined their several expressions because I am not able certainly to determine which was most directly intended. There is a great deal of beauty and spirit in the interpretation which Mr. Addison gives of this petition: *Spectat.* Vol. III. No. 207.

[m] *Our daily bread*; τον αρτον ημων τον επιουσιον.] I can see no reason for changing our received *translation*; and cannot but acquiesce in Mr. Mede's remark that επιουσ. signifies what is *sufficient* for our *present support* and subsistence, as περισσ. signifies *abundant*: so that *this petition* is nearly parallel to that of Agur, Prov. xxx. 8. (See *Mede's Works*, p. 125.) This is a most excellent lesson to teach us, on the one hand, moderation in our desires, and, on the other, an humble dependance on Divine Providence for the most necessary supplies, be our possessions or our abilities ever so great.

[n] Such pardon—as we are willing to impart to them.] It is hardly possible to imagine a more effectual expedient to promote the *forgiveness* of injuries than this, of making it a part of our *daily prayer* to ask *such pardon* from God as we impart to our offending brother. For in this circumstance every malicious purpose against him would turn *this petition* into an *imprecation*, by which we should, as it were, bind down the wrath and vengeance of God upon ourselves.

[o] *Rescue*

for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

our souls endangered by them; *but* if we must be thus tried, do thou graciously *rescue us from* the power of *the evil one* [o], that he may not triumph in our sin and ruin! These things we know that thou canst do for thy children, and we are humbly bold to hope thou wilt do them for us: *for thine is the kingdom* of universal nature [p], *and the* fulness of almighty *power, and the glory* of infinite perfection; and to thee be the praise of all ascribed *for ever. Amen.* So may it be! We most sincerely and earnestly desire that thou mayest be glorified and our petitions heard and accepted." SECT. XI. Mat. VI. 13.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Let this be the model of your prayers, for these are the most important blessings you can ask. And let me particularly charge you to remember the view and connection in which I have taught you to ask the pardon of your sins: *for if you forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will also forgive you*, supposing that forgiveness to proceed from a truly religious principle: 14

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

But if you do not forgive men their offences, but continue to cherish resentment and to seek revenge, *neither will* that God whom you call *your* heavenly *Father*, own you for his genuine offspring and *forgive* you *your offences;* but by using the petition I have now been prescribing, you will in effect bind down a curse upon yourselves. 15

16 Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure

I would also apply the general advice I before gave to fasting as well as to prayer; and would *again* exhort you, That *when you keep a* private *fast* (as I conclude my disciples will often do) you *be not like the hypocrites*, going about with a dejected melancholy face and *putting on a dismal* 16

o *Rescue us from the evil one.*] Ρυσαι ημας απο του πονηρου may literally be rendered thus. For this signification of πονηρος, see *note* h, p. 193.

p *For thine is the kingdom*, &c.] Though I am sensible there is some reason to doubt of the genuineness of this *doxology*, notwithstanding all that *Mr. Jones* (in his *History of the Canon*, Vol. I. p. 141, 142) has urged in its defence. (See *Dr. Mill in loc.* and *Mr. Hallet* in his *Notes on Scripture*, Vol. I. p. 133, & *seq.*) Yet it is certainly very ancient; and, as Bishop Hopkins, Mr. Blair, and other excellent writers have well observed, so admirably suits and enforces every preceding petition, that I could not persuade myself to omit it. And I hope the learned reader will excuse me, if, in matters of moment, I sometimes seem over cautious of omitting some passages which are indeed wanting in many ancient *manuscripts*, and omitted by some celebrated *commentators*, ancient as well as modern. I apprehend I shall have done my part, in thus hinting at the doubt which learned men have entertained concerning them, where I conceive the reasons for such doubt to be considerable. For the word *amen*, as it signifies *truth*, see *note* g on John i. 51, p. 129. When added to the conclusion of our prayers it is intended to express the sincerity and earnestness with which we desire the blessing we ask, with some cheerfulness of hope as to the success of our petitions.

SECT. XI.

mal air; for upon these occasions *they* emaciate, contract and *deform their countenances*[q], *that* by their sad and mournful looks *they may appear* Mat. VI. 16. *to men to fast*, and may be esteemed as persons of unusual mortification and holiness: *verily I say unto you, That*, in this notice that is taken of them by their fellow creatures, *they have* all *their reward*, and have not any to expect from

disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast: verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

17 God. *But* thou, O my disciple, *when thou keepest* such *a fast*, and comest from thy devout retirement, dress thyself just as thou dost at other times; *anoint thy head* with oil, *and wash thy*

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face:

18 *face*[r], instead of fouling it with ashes; *That thou mayest not appear to men as one that fasteth, but* only *to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who sees in secret*, and observes what passes in retirement, as the surest test of men's true characters, *will* not fail to *reward thee openly* for thy genuine and unaffected devotion.

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 LET us learn from these repeated admonitions of our blessed
15, 16 *Redeemer* what is the only acceptable *principle* of every religious action; namely, a desire to approve ourselves to *God* in it: and let us particularly bring it into the instances in which it is here recommended.

2, 6 *Our Lord* takes it for granted that his disciples would be both *charitable* and *devout*. Let us cultivate both these branches of the *Christian* temper and avoid *ostentation* in both; as remembering the day approaches when every one of us must be *made manifest* in his true character before the tribunal of *Christ*. And, oh, what discoveries will then be opened upon the world! How many specious masks will be plucked off, that the *hypocrite's* character may appear in its native deformity! And, on the other hand, how many *secret acts* of piety and benevolence, which have been industriously concealed from human observation, will then shine forth

q Emaciate, contract and *deform their countenances.*] I know not any word in our language which exactly answers to αφανιζουσι in this connection. It is rendered *corrupt* in ver. 20, (compare Acts xiii. 41. Heb. viii. 13. and James iv. 14.) and properly signifies to *change, spoil* and *consume*; and is with peculiar elegance applicable to such an *alteration* of the natural countenance as proceeded from their *emaciating* themselves, and contracting their faces into a *dismal form*. The learned author of *Fortuita Sacra*, p. 13—22, has rendered it unnecessary for me to add any thing more on this or the following *verse*.

r *Anoint thy head* with oil, *and wash thy face.*] This was usual among the Jews, not only at *feasts*, but at other times; compare Ruth iii. 3. 2 Sam. xiv. 2. and Judith xvi. 8. On the other hand *dust and ashes* were often used in times of deep *mourning*, or public *fasting*, which must sadly *deform the countenance*; see 2 Sam. xiii. 19. Esth. iv. 1, 3. Isa. lxi. 3. Dan. ix. 3. and Jonah iii. 6.

forth in all their glory, celebrated and rewarded by *God himself, who sees in secret*, and whose eye penetrates all the recesses of our houses and our hearts! SECT. XLI. Ver.

There may our praise and our portion be! In the mean time let us with humble pleasure obey the call of our Divine Master, and be often addressing our *heavenly Father* in such language as he hath taught us; *entering* for secret exercise of devotion *into our closet and shutting our door*, excluding (as far as possible) every thought which would interrupt us in these sacred and happy moments. From thence let our *prayers* daily come before the throne *like incense*, and *the lifting up of our hands be as* the morning and *the evening sacrifice*. (Psal. cxli. 2.) 18 6

Christ himself has condescended to teach us to *pray*. Attentive to his precepts, animated by his example and emboldened by his intercession, let us learn and practise the lesson. Shed abroad on our hearts, O Lord, thy *Spirit of adoption*, which may *teach us to cry, Abba, Father!* to draw nigh to thee with filial reverence and confidence and with fraternal charity for each other, even for the *whole family*, to whom thou graciously ownest the relation! Inspire us with that zeal for thy glory which may render the honour of *thy name*, the prosperity of *thy kingdom* and the accomplishment of *thy will* far dearer to us than any interest of our own! On thee may we maintain a cheerful dependance for our *daily bread*, and *having food and raiment, be therewith content!* (1 Tim. vi. 8.) most solicitously seeking the *pardon* of our *past sins* and the influences of thy grace to preserve us from *future temptations*, or to secure us in them! And may our sense of that need in which we stand of *forgiveness from thee*, dispose us cordially to *forgive each other*, especially as thou hast wisely and graciously made this the necessary means of receiving our own pardon! Our corrupted hearts are too little disposed for these sentiments; but may God's almighty power produce and cherish them in us! and while the *comfort* is ours may *all the glory* be his, *through Jesus Christ our Lord!* Amen. 9, 13 14, 15

SECT. XLI.

Our Lord cautions his disciples against the love of the present world, and urges a variety of lively and convincing arguments to dissuade them from anxiety about the morrow. Mat. VI. 19. *to the end.*

MAT. VI. 19.

LAY not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth

MAT. VI. 19.

I WOULD also take this opportunity of cautioning you, my hearers, against that covetous temper which the Pharisees are so ready to indulge (compare Luke xvi. 14. and Mat. xxiii. 14.) SECT. XLI. Mat. VI. 19.

SECT. xii.

Mat. VI. 19.

14.) and therefore add, *Do not* make it your great care to *lay up for yourselves treasures* here *on earth*, where so many accidents may deprive you of them; *where the moth*, for instance, may spoil your finest garments, *and* a devouring *canker* may *consume* your corn, or may corrupt the very metals you have hoarded [a]; *and where thieves* may *dig through* the strongest walls that you have raised about them, *and* may *steal* them away. *But* build your happiness on a nobler and more certain foundation, and *store up for yourselves treasures in heaven*, where none of these accidents can happen; *where neither moth nor canker can consume* them, *and where thieves cannot break in, nor steal* them away; but the arms of Everlasting Power and Love shall secure you from every calamity and invasion.

The influence which this advice will have on your whole conduct should engage you to attend more diligently to it; *for where* that which you account *your* chief *treasure is, there will your heart also be*, and thither will the tendency and series of your actions be referred. See therefore that you form a right judgment on so important an article and do not over-value the world and its enjoyments. For as *the eye is the lamp of the* whole *body*; and *therefore*, on the one hand, *if thine eye be clear* [b], and free from any vitiating humour, *thy whole body will be full of light*; *But*, on the other hand, *if thine eye be distempered, thy whole body will be full of darkness*: so it is with respect to the practical judgment you form as to the worth of earthly and heavenly enjoyments. *If therefore the light that*

moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal.

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness: if therefore the light that is in thee

[a] *Canker* may *consume* your corn, or corrupt the very metals you have hoarded.] The word βρωσις is by some translated *smut* or *weavel*, and is supposed to signify any little *insect* that gets into corn and eats it. Mr. Blair seems to understand it so, and thinks *our Lord* here refers to *clothes, grain* and *gold*, as the chief *treasures* respectively obnoxious to *moth, smut* and *thieves*; which may seem the more probable, as a different word ιος, is used for *rust*, Jam. v. 3. But as βρωσις properly signifies any thing that *eats into* another substance, I rather chose to render it *canker*, which has much the same ambiguity; and to *paraphrase* it in a manner including both the senses.

[b] *If thine eye be clear*, &c.] Some commentators have explained this as if *our Lord* intended here to urge the practice of *liberality*, as what would have a great influence on the whole of a man's character and conduct; and suppose it illustrated by all those passages where *an evil eye* signifies a grudging temper, and *a good eye* a bountiful disposition (compare Deut. xv. 9. Prov. xxiii. 6. xxviii. 22. and xxii. 9. *Heb.*) and also by those texts in which *simplicity* is put for *liberality*, (Rom. xii. 8. and 2 Cor. viii. 2. ix. 11—13. *Gr.*) See *Hammond, Whitby, L'Enfant*, and *Beausobre, in loc.* But the sense given above appears most natural as well as most extensive.—I have rendered απλους *clear*, rather than *single*, as less ambiguous, and with more evident propriety applied to the *eye*: it is opposed to an *eye* overgrown with a *film*, which would obstruct the sight.

[c] *God*

thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! and if the maxims you lay down to yourselves are wrong, how very erroneous must your conduct be! SECT. xli. Mat. VI. 23.

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

And do not impose upon yourselves so far as 24 to imagine that your hearts can be equally divided between heaven and earth: for as *no man can serve two masters* whose interests and commands are directly contrary to each other; *but will* quickly appear, *either* comparatively to *hate the one, and love the other; or*, by degrees, at least, *will* grow weary of so disagreeable a situation, so as to *adhere* entirely *to the one, and* quite *neglect* and abandon *the other:* so you will find *you cannot* at the same time *serve God and mammon*[c], that unworthy idol to which so many are devoting their hearts and their pursuits.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

And I would charge you *therefore* to take heed 25 that your affections be not engaged in a service so inconsistent with religion and true happiness; and in particular, *I say unto you*[d], *Be not* distressed with *anxious* cares *about your* subsistence in *life*[e] *what you shall eat, and what you shall drink*, when your present stock of provisions is gone; *nor with respect to your body, what you shall put on*, when the garments you have are worn out. *Is not life* a better and *more* valuable gift *than food, and the body than raiment?* And if it be, why should you not trust that almighty and gracious Being who formed your bodies and inspired them with life, to maintain the work of his own hands?

You

c *God and mammon.*] *Mammon* is a Syriac word for *riches*, which *our Lord* beautifully represents as a *person* whom the folly of men had deified. It is well known the Greeks had a fictitious *god of wealth;* but I cannot find that he was ever directly worshipped in Syria under the name of *mammon.*

d *Therefore I say unto you*, &c.] A *late writer*, who takes upon him, by the strength of his own reason, to reject at pleasure what the *apostles* believed and taught, strangely complains of a want of *connection* between *this* and the *preceding verse.* But can there be any better reason assigned against immoderate *anxiety* than *this*, that such a subjection to *mammon* as this expresses is utterly inconsistent with the love and service of God?

e *Be not anxious about your* subsistence in *life.*] It is certain that the word μεριμναω generally signifies an *excessive anxiety* (see Luke x. 41. xii. 11. xxi. 34. and Phil. iv. 6. and indeed almost every other place where it is used); which is agreeable to the *derivation* of it. There is no need therefore to say (as Archbishop *Tillotson*, Vol. II. p. 255, and Dr. *Clarke* in his *Sermons*, Vol. III. p. 116, *& seq.* do) that *our Lord* only addresses this to *his apostles*, who were to cast themselves on an extraordinary Providence, without being any wise concerned themselves for their support. Mr. Blair has well proved the contrary at large in his excellent *Appendix* to his *fourth Sermon*, Vol. I. p. 55, *& seq.* and it is easy to observe that the arguments *our Lord* urges contain nothing peculiar to their case, but are built on considerations applicable to *all Christians;* compare Phil. iv. 6. and 1 Pet. v. 7. as also Luke xxii. 35, 36. and Acts xx. 34. from whence it appears that the *apostles themselves* were not entirely to neglect a prudent care for their own subsistence in dependence on miraculous provisions.

f *The*

SECT. XLI.

Mat. VI. 26.

You may surely do it when you reflect on his care of the inferior creatures. *Look on the birds of the air*, for instance, that are now flying around you[f]: *for* though they are gay and cheerful to a proverb, yet do *they neither sow nor reap: nor* do they, like some other animals, *gather* a stock of food *into hoards*, to lay up for winter; *and yet* the rich providence of *your heavenly Father* plentifully *feedeth them*; and *are not you*, his children, *much more valuable* in his sight *than they?* as well as much better furnished with means of providing for yourselves[g]? Why then should you at any time suspect his care? And after all, this immoderate carefulness is useless, as well as unnecessary; for *which of you can, by* [*all his*] *anxiety, add to his age* or vigour[h] so much as *one cubit*, or even the smallest measure or moment beyond what God shall appoint? Nay, it is much more probable you should rather impair than strengthen your constitution by indulging such a temper, which sometimes brings on grey hairs and death before their time.

26 Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them: are not ye much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature?

And as for raiment, why are ye anxious [*about that?*] Observe not only the animal, but what is yet much lower, the vegetable part of the creation; and particularly, *consider* there *the lillies of the field, how they grow; they toil not* to prepare the materials of their covering, *nor do they spin* or weave them into garments: *Yet I say unto you, That even* the magnificent *Solomon in all his* royal *glory*, when sitting on his throne of ivory and gold, (1 Kings x. 18.) *was not arrayed* in garments of so pure a white[i], and of such

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lillies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

[f] *The birds of the air* now flying around you.] It is not so proper to render πετεινα *fowls*, as that word generally signifies the *larger kind of birds*, and especially those under the care of men. For mentioning *the birds*, as then in their sight, see the latter part of *note* [o] on Mat. v. 14. p. 203.

[g] *Are you not much more valuable than they*, as well as much better furnished with means of providing for yourselves?] Ουχ υμεις μαλλον διαφερετε αυτων; may be rendered *Have not you greatly the advantage of them?* which may refer to men's being capable of *sowing, reaping* and *gathering into barns*, which the *birds* are not: and though I rather prefer the *former sense*, I thought it not improper to hint at *the other*; as I have done in many other places where such ambiguities have occurred.

[h] *Can add to his age.*] It is well known that this is frequently the signification of the word ηλικια; there being many places where it is evident that it is used for *age* (as John ix. 21, 23. and Heb. xi. 11.) and certainly it makes the best sense here; for it is seldom found that persons are solicitous about growing *a cubit taller*.—I confess *a cubit of age* is not a common phrase among us, though *an inch of time* be sometimes used; and in this view, had I rendered *cubit* by *moment*, as a learned friend who remarked on this passage advised, it would have been very justifiable.

[i] *Was not arrayed* in garments of so pure a white.] As the *eastern princes* were often clothed in *white robes*, and they were generally counted a magnificent apparel (compare Esth. viii. 15. and Dan. vii. 9.)

I think

SECT. xli.

such curious workmanship *as one of these* lillies presents to your view. *And if God so clothe the grass of the field,* and shelters and adorns the flower[k] that grows wild amongst it, *which is* [*flourishing*] *to-day, and* perhaps *to-morrow is thrown into the furnace* or the still[l], [*will he*] *not much more* [*clothe*] *you,* his servants and his children, *O ye of little faith?* that you should be so diffident as to distrust his care, or in the least to doubt of it! Mat. VI. 30.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?

Be not ye therefore any more distracted and torn in pieces (as it were) with *anxious* and unbelieving thoughts, *saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink?* How is it we shall be provided for, *or what shall we wear,* in the remainder of our lives? 31

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

(*For* it is really beneath your character as my disciples, thus to distress yourselves on this account: *the heathen,* who are strangers to the promises of God's covenant and to the hopes of his glory, do indeed *seek after all these things*: and it is no wonder that their minds are taken up with them: but you have greater business to employ you, and higher hopes to animate and encourage you;) *for* you may be assured that as *your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things* while you dwell in the body, he will not fail to provide them for you. 32

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and

But I exhort you that you turn your cares into a nobler channel and *seek,* in the *first* place, and with the greatest earnestness and concern, *the kingdom of God and his righteousness*[m]; labouring 33

I think it more natural to explain the words thus (as Calmet does in his *Dissert.* Vol. II. p. 230), than to suppose with Ray (on the *Creation,* p. 107), that κρινα signified *tulips* of various colours, or a *purple* kind of *lily.* Some have indeed quoted Cant. v. 13. in support of the last interpretation; but that text may refer to the *fragrancy* of those *flowers,* rather than their *hue.*

k Shelters and adorns the flower.] The word αμφιεννυσιν, which we render *clothe* properly expresses the *putting on a complete dress* that surrounds the body on all sides; and is used with peculiar beauty for that elegant yet strong external *membrane,* which (like the *skin* in the human body) at once adorns the tender structure of the *vegetable,* and likewise guards it from the injuries of the weather. Every *microscope* in which a *flower* is viewed affords a lively comment on this text.

l *Is thrown into the furnace* or the still.] I apprehend that this may be as properly the signification of the word κλιβανον as *oven,* and that the sense will thus appear to be more easy; for it can hardly be supposed that *grass* or *flowers* should be *thrown into the oven* the day after they are cut down; unless it was the custom to heat their ovens with *new hay,* which seems not very natural. Elsner indeed renders χορτον *stubble;* but that seems not to suit the context.

m *The kingdom of God, and his righteousness.*] By *righteousness* Dr Sykes here understands the Messiah; *the righteous Branch* who was to *rule in righteousness,* and in whose days *the righteous were to flourish,* (see *Dr. Sykes on Christianity,* p. 35, 36): But it seems more natural to interpret it of that way of *becoming righteous* which the gospel proposes, and which St. Paul, by

SECT. XLI.

labouring to secure an interest in the promises of the gospel yourselves, and to promote its reception among others, that by submitting to Mat. VI. 33. the righteousness of God you may be thus accepted as righteous before him: in that you will be sure of success; *and* as for *all these* little *things* of which I have now been speaking, they *shall be added to you over and above* [n], and, as it were, thrown in amidst a crowd of far more valuable blessings. And *therefore*, while you faithfully attend to this, *be not anxious* even *for the morrow*, and much less for future years; *for* indeed *the morrow shall provide for itself;* that Providence which hath taken care of you formerly, shall send in new supplies and suggest new expedients, as new necessities and difficulties require them: and, in the mean time, you need not anticipate future trials; for without such an addition, *sufficient for the present day* [*is*] *the evil of it*, and it is well if you have wisdom and grace proportionable even to that.

and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 34 How kind are these *precepts of our* blessed *Redeemer!* the substance of which is indeed but this, *Do thyself no harm.* Let us not be so ungrateful to him and so injurious to ourselves, as to 31, 32 harrass and oppress our minds with that burden of *anxiety* which he has so graciously taken off. Every verse and clause we have been reading speaks at once to the understanding and the heart. We will not therefore indulge these unnecessary, these useless, these mischievous *cares;* we will not borrow the *anxieties* and 34 distresses of *the morrow* to aggravate those of the *present day:* but rather will we cheerfully repose ourselves on that *heavenly Father* who *knows that we need these things*, and has given us *life*, which 25 is *more than meat; and the body*, which is *more than raiment;* and thus instructed in the philosophy of our heavenly Master will 26, 28 learn a lesson of faith and cheerfulness from every *bird of the air* and every *flower of the field.*

Let the *Gentiles* that know not God perplex their minds with unworthy suspicions, or bow them down to the ignoble servitude of

by a phrase exactly equivalent to this, calls *the righteousness of God.* Compare Rom. x. 3. and Phil. iii. 9.

[n] *Added over and above.*] This seems to be the exact import of the word προστεθησεται, than which expression nothing could have been more proper; for these *temporal blessings* are by no means essential to the stipulations of the *covenant of grace*, but are entirely to be referred to the Divine good pleasure to add or with-hold as God shall see fit. Compare 1 Kings iii. 11—13.

[a] Place

of *mammon*, that base rival of our living *Jehovah:* but we, far from desiring to share our hearts and our services between *two* such contrary *masters*, will cheerfully devote them to him, whose right to them is so infinitely beyond all room for any contest. Let us *take heed and beware of covetousness*, and make it our business not to *hoard up earthly* and corruptible *treasures*, but *first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness:* so shall *other things be added* for present subsistence; and so shall we *lay up in store* an incorruptible *treasure in heaven*, in which we shall be rich and happy, when the *riches of this world* are consumed with their owners, and the whole *fashion of it is passed away.* SECT. XLI. Ver. 24, 19, 20, 33

While these divine maxims are spreading their *light* about us, let our *eye be clear* to behold them, and our heart open to receive them; and let us cautiously guard against those deceitful principles of action which would give a wrong bias to all our pursuits, and turn *the light which is in us* into a fatal and incurable *darkness.* 22, 23

SECT. XLII.

Our Lord proceeds in his discourse to caution his disciples against rash judgment, and to exhort them to impartiality, prudence, prayer and resolution; and warns them against seducers. Mat. VII. 1—20.

MAT. VII. 1.
JUDGE not, that ye be not judged.

MAT. VII. 1.

YOU, my disciples, live in a very censorious age, and the scribes and Pharisees, who are in the highest esteem for the strictness of their lives, place a great part of their own religion in condemning others[a]; but see to it that you *do not judge* those about you in this rigorous and severe manner, nor pass such unnecessary or uncharitable censures upon them, *that you may not* yourselves *be judged* with the like severity. *For* in this respect you will find, that *according to the judgment with which you judge* others, *you shall be judged; and by that* very *measure* that *ye mete* to them, *it shall be measured back to you:* God and man will make great allowances to the character of the candid and benevolent; but they must expect "judgment without mercy who have shewed no mercy;" nor can they deny the equity of such treatment. (Jam. ii. 13.) SECT. XLII. Mat. VII. 1. 2

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

The

a Place a great part of their own religion in condemning others.] Though Christ does not so directly level his discourse against the Pharisees in *this chapter* as in the *two foregoing*, he seems to glance upon them in this and other expressions which he uses in it. That they were very culpable on this head appears from such passages as Luke xviii. 9—14. xvi. 14, 15. and John vii. 47—49. (Compare Isa. lxv. 5.) Their unjust censures of Christ are the strongest instances of it that can be conceived.

SECT. xlii.

Mat. VII. 3.

The caution I have mentioned is more apparently necessary, considering how prone men are to be partial to themselves: *but why dost thou,* whoever thou art, *look at* that little infirmity which is but like *a mote in thy brother's eye, while thou observest not the* much greater fault which is like a *beam in thine own eye*[b]? *Or how canst thou say to thy brother,* with any appearance of justice, or any degree of assurance, *Hold still,* [*and*] *I will take the mote out of thine eye*[c]; *while behold,* it is much more visible that [*there is*] *a beam in thine own eye? Thou* partial *hypocrite,* begin thy reformation at home, and make it thy *first* care to *clear out the beam from thine own eye,* or to correct the errors of thy judgment and the enormities of thy life; *and then wilt thou* better *discern* [*how*] *to remove the mote out of thy brother's eye,* and mayest attempt it with more decency, as well as greater probability of success.

I would farther remind you that how unexceptionable soever your own characters may be, there is some caution to be used in attempting to reprove, or even to inform others; or you may expose your admonitions to contempt and yourselves to abuse. *Give not* that *holy* [*food*] *to dogs,* or to such profane, furious and persecuting wretches as deserve no better name; *nor cast your* precious *pearls* of heavenly wisdom *before* such profligate sensualists as resemble *swine* rather than men; *lest,* as those brutal creatures might do, if jewels were thrown before them, *they trample them under their feet* with scorn, *and turning* [*upon you*] as if they had received an injury rather than a favour, fasten on you and *tear you*[d]: for so extremely sordid and malignant

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

6 Give not that which *is* holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine; lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

[b] *Look at a mote in thy brother's eye, while thou observest not the beam in thine own eye.*] *Dr. Lightfoot* (*Hor. Heb. in loc.*) has shewn that this expression, as well as that in ver. 2, was a *proverb* among the Jews. The word κάρφος, which we render *mote*, is well explained by Hesychius, who tells us it signifies *a little splinter of wood* (though others understand it of *a small seed*;) and thus it is opposed to δόκον, a large *beam*, with great propriety. But as it is impossible that such a thing as *a beam of wood* should be lodged in the eye, I am ready to imagine that these words might signify different kinds of *distempers* to which that tender part is subject; the former of which might be no more, in comparison of the latter, than a *grain* or *splinter* to a *beam*.

[c] *Hold still* [*and*] *I will take the mote out of thine eye.*] This seems to be the exact meaning of ἄφες ἐκβάλω, which I chose to translate thus *literally*, as I think it elegantly intimates how ready men are to *shrink back* from *reproof*. The *simile* here used implies that it is as absurd for a *bad man* to set up for a *reprover* of others, as it would be for one that is almost *blind* himself to pretend to perform operations on other men's *eyes*.

[d] *And turning* [*upon you*] *tear you.*] I cannot blame the *translation* of 1727, which follows Castalio, and renders it *lest these* (that is, the swine) *trample them under foot, and those* (that is, the dogs) *turn upon you and tear you*. This may perhaps be *our Lord's* meaning, but it did not seem necessary

lignant will you find many in these degenerate days. SECT. xlii.

Mat. VII. 7.

7 Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Now, whether you want wisdom to guide you in these difficulties, or fortitude to animate you against such hardships; or, in a word, whatever your exigencies or necessities may be, *ask* the Divine assistance in prayer, *and it shall be given you; seek* it, *and you shall find* it, and if it be a while delayed, *knock* with repeated importunity at the door of mercy, *and it shall* at length *be* graciously *opened to you.*

8 For every one that asketh receiveth: and he that seeketh findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

To this you are encouraged by the experience of every praying soul; *for every one that asketh* aright *receiveth; and he that* diligently *seeketh, findeth; and to him that* patiently *knocketh,* [*the door*] *shall be opened.*

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

And indeed[e] it is no inconsiderable encouragement which you may derive from that natural affection to your offspring which a merciful God has infused into the hearts of those of you that are parents; for *what one man is there among you*[f], in all this numerous assembly, *who, if his son should ask him for bread, will give him a stone?*

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

Or if he ask him *for a fish, will give him a serpent?* Can you imagine any father could be so unnatural as to deny the necessary supplies of life to his hungry child; and instead of these to give him what would starve or poison him? *If therefore you,* imperfect and *evil as you are,* and some of you perhaps tenacious, froward and unkind, yet *know how to give good gifts to your chil-*

11 If ye then being evil, know *how* to give good gifts unto your children, how much more

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necessary to alter the *version*, as it is possible that *dogs* might *trample upon jewels*, and *swine* might be ready to *wound* those that disturbed them.—That the figure here supposed is sometimes used does indeed appear by comparing Mat. xii. 22. 1 Cor. xi. 11. 2 Cor. ii. 15. and Philem. ver. 5. But I think the order of the words as they stand in the *original* may very well be retained in the *translation* of these places; for the *transposition of words*, even where there is a *trajection in the sense*, is so dangerous a thing where *sacred writers* are in question, that no small advantage gained in elegance or perspicuity seems sufficient to counterbalance it.

[e] *And indeed.*] Dr. Whitby thinks that where the particle η is placed at the beginning of a sentence it is intended merely for *a mark of interrogation*; and in this way it is that he supposes we are to understand it *here*, and likewise in Mat. xx. 15. and 1 Cor. xiv. 36. But as the sense will very fitly bear it, I conceive that in each of these places it may be rendered *indeed.*

[f] *What one man is there among you?*] This seems to be the *emphasis* of τις εστιν εξ υμων ανθρωπος: some think it also to imply the same as if it had been said, *Which of you is there, though but a man?* And as what is added in the *eleventh verse* plainly expresses this sense, perhaps it might also be intended here.—*Young preachers* will, I hope, observe how much life and force it adds to these discourses of *our Lord* that they so closely are directed, through the whole of them, as an immediate address *to his hearers*; and are not loose and general *harangues*, in the manner of those *essays* which are now grown so fashionable in pulpits. If any are grown too polite to learn *true oratory* from Christ, I wish they would at least learn it from *Demosthenes*, who, I doubt not, would have admired the *eloquence* of this sermon.

SECT. XLII.

children; if you find your hearts disposed and ready to communicate the best of what you have for their relief and sustenance, *how much more* Mat. VII. 11. *will your* almighty and all-bountiful *Father in heaven,* who has a perfect sight of all your wants, and can with perfect ease supply them, and who himself has wrought into your hearts these benevolent affections, be ready to exceed you in expressing his kindness, so as freely to *give good things to those that ask* them of *him* by fervent and constant prayer?

more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

12 Being animated *therefore* by his goodness[g], study to express your gratitude for it by your integrity and kindness to your fellow-creatures; and take it as a most sacred rule, *All things which ye would be willing that men should do to you, do ye also in like manner to them:* treat them in every instance just as you would think it reasonable to be treated by them, if you were in their circumstances, and they in yours: *for this is,* in effect, a summary and abstract of all the human and social virtues recommended in the moral precepts of *the law and the prophets;* and it was one of the greatest ends of both[h] to bring men to this equitable and amiable temper.

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law, and the prophets.

13 It will indeed be very difficult thus to overcome the prejudices of self-love, and to subdue those other corruptions of the heart which oppose themselves to the obedience of the Divine laws; and the persecutions to which good men are often exposed will increase the difficulty[i]: but I would

13 Enter ye in at the

[g] Being animated *therefore* by his goodness.] Some would have us to consider the *particle* ουν in this passage as a mere *expletive;* but there is certainly a force in the *connection* beyond what most have observed. See the excellent discourses of Bishop Atterbury and Dr. Evans upon it; which illustrate the sense, reasonableness and use of *this golden law,* in a manner that deserves the most attentive perusal.

[h] One of the greatest ends of both.] I say *one of the greatest,* that this may be reconciled with *our Lord's* declaring the *love of God* to be *the first and great commandment* (Mat. xxii. 38,) and it is indeed a most absurd and fatal error to imagine that *the regulation of social life is the only end of religion.* I fear many good-natured *deists* will perish by taking this one principle for granted, and my heart is wounded with the sad apprehension of it.

[i] Persecutions—will increase the difficulty.] In order to reconcile what is here advanced with those passages which assert *Christ's yoke* to be *easy,* and *the ways of wisdom* to be *ways of pleasantness,* &c. a late learned writer thinks it necessary to suppose that *this text* refers *entirely* to the case of *persecution;* and that the *strait gate* is a violent death, which lay at the end of the *narrow way,* and concluded the injuries and calamities which *persecutors* would bring upon *Christians.* (See *Mr. Hallet's Disc.* Vol. III. p. 24—29.) But nothing is more certain than that Christ requires from *all his disciples,* in all ages and places, a life of *mortification* and *self-denial;* which, though it is mingled with and introductory to *pleasures* abundantly sufficient to counterbalance it, yet to corrupt nature is difficult and painful; (see Mat. v. 29, 30. xvi. 24. Rom. vi. 6. viii. 13. Col. iii. 5. Gal. v. 16, 17. and 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27. However, therefore, I allow that *persecutions* are to be included among other difficulties, yet I can see no reason to believe that *martyrdom* was

the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it.

would press you to exert a becoming resolution, and courageously to *enter in through the strait gate* of self-denial and holiness; *for wide is the gate, and* smooth and *spacious the way which leads to destruction; and there are many who enter* into destruction *by it:* And this they do *because* they are discouraged by the hardships which attend the entrance on a religious life, or must be expected in a progress in it; as they see that *strait is the gate, and rugged* and painful *the way which leads to* eternal *life; and they who find it,* and with a holy ardency and resolution press into it, so as to arrive at that blessed end, *are* comparatively *few:* see to it, therefore, that you be of that little number. SECT. lxii. Mat. VII. 13. 14

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

And it concerns you so much the rather to be careful about it, as the falsehood of many who set up for religious teachers will in some degree increase the difficulty and danger. *Be* therefore *on your guard against* those *false prophets, who come to you* indeed *in the clothing of sheep*[k], in the most specious forms of humility, innocence and piety; *but inwardly are ravening wolves,* which seek nothing but to feed themselves by the destruction of the flock. 15

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do

And you will find on a more accurate observation of their actions, that *you may* generally *know them by their fruits*[l], and 16

was so common in the age of those to whom Christ addressed himself, as to be spoken of in such general language as *the gate leading to life:* not to insist upon it that *our Lord* now speaks of what then *was*, and not what *would be* the case in future years; and that he mentions the *gate* before the *way;* whereas I think Mr. Hallet's interpretation would have required a different *order.*—When Grotius refers the *straitness of the gate* to the difficulty of virtue in itself, and the *ruggedness of the way to* accidental oppositions, he seems to refine too much. Many *parallel* passages from *heathen writers* may be seen in *him* and Dr. Whitby.

[k] *Who come to you in the clothing of sheep.*] It is a very low thought to suppose that *our Lord* here refers to the *rough habit* worn by *false prophets* of old; for which purpose so many *critics* quote Zech. xiii. 4. and, very unaccountably, Heb. xi. 37. For, not to insist on the probability there is that those *rough garments* might be made of *goat's* or *camel's hair* rather than *wool,* (compare 2 Kings i. 8. and Mat. iii. 4.) the beauty of the *simile* is lost by this interpretation. *A wolf in sheep's clothing* is grown into a *proverb* for a wicked man that makes a great profession of religion, yet cannot dissemble so well as not to be discovered by attentive observation; which was just the character of the Pharisees in *our Saviour's* days; see Mat. xxiii. 23—28. and Luke xi. 39—42.

[l] *You may know them by their fruits.*] The characters of men are not to be discovered by the *doctrines* that they teach; and therefore this cannot (as some have thought) be the meaning of *knowing them* who were their teachers *by their fruits.* It is more reasonable to explain it of their *actions,* which are often called *fruits;* (compare Mat. iii. 8. xxi. 43. John xv. 2, 5. and Col. i. 6.)—It will be objected that *bad men* may teach *good doctrines,* and even the worst have been known to do it in some instances. But as to this, I answer that *our Lord* does not exhort his disciples to reject whatever such men taught, but only to *be upon their guard against them,* that they might not credit any thing merely on their authority.—I only add that *this caution* would, by a parity of reason, extend to all that set up for *teachers,* as well as to *prophets* (not to insist on the *latitude* in which that word is used;) so that it would at

SECT. xlii.

and discover, through all their disguise, that base character which lurks beneath, and which may justly render you suspicious as to their doctrines: (2 Tim. iii. 5—9.) For *do men* look to *gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles*[m]? Or can it be expected by you, in a common way, that you should gather spiritual advantage, or should obtain religious improvement from the lessons of wicked men? Their influence, on the whole, will be more likely to debauch than edify your minds; for as the fruit will be agreeable in its nature and kind to the tree that produces it, *even so every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces bad fruit;* and in like manner will the fruits that men produce be answerable to the habitual frame and disposition of their hearts. Nor can it indeed be otherwise in the usual course of things; for as *a good tree cannot bear evil fruit*, so *neither can a corrupt tree bear good fruit;* (compare Mat. xii. 33—35. sect. lxii.) And therefore, by the way, to prevent such false pretenders to religion from being a lasting incumbrance and mischief, they shall assuredly be overtaken by the righteous judgment of God; and as you see that *every tree which*, after a competent trial, *beareth not good fruit*, how fair and flourishing soever it may seem, *is cut down and cast into the fire*; such too will be the end of hypocritical professors and ungodly men, which it becomes you all seriously to consider. Upon the whole it will be found that there is now a difference in men's characters correspondent to the great difference to be made in their future estate; *so that* I had reason to say, that *you shall* generally *know them by their fruits;* the disguise will fall off in an unguarded moment, and it will be your wisdom to observe and improve the signal.

Mat. VII. 16.

Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

IMPROVE-

at least obliquely glance on the Pharisees, whose influence over the people was so injurious to the gospel, and so exceeding mischievous to those who had a veneration for them, that *our Lord* found it necessary often to repeat such cautions. See Mat. xv. 12, 13. xvi. 6. xxiii. 2, *& seq.* Mark. viii. 15. and Luke xii. 1.

m *Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?*] These words suppose the *plant* was *known* to be a *thorn* or a *thistle*, and represent the folly of looking for *grapes* or *figs* from plants that had it not in their nature to bear them, or of expecting *good* from persons that were vicious and corrupt. Had Christ meant what has commonly been supposed, he would rather have said, *You do not find thorns on a vine, or thistles on a fig-tree.*

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. XLII.

WHEN will the happy time come in which *Christians* shall form themselves on these important *maxims* of their great *Master!* When shall they be known to be *his disciples* by the *candour* of their sentiments, the *equity* of their conduct and the *beneficence* of their actions, as well as by the *articles* of their *faith* and the *forms* of their *worship!* Let us all apply these charges to ourselves in the dear and awful name of him that gave them. Ver.

What can be more dreadful to us than to think of being severely *judged* by that God, without whose hourly forbearance and gracious indulgence we are all undone? Let us then exercise that *mercy* which we need: and to form our minds to this most reasonable temper, let us often be thinking of *our own* many *infirmities*, and be humbling ourselves before God on account of them. 1, 2, 3, 5

Animated by the gracious invitations and the precious promises which are here given, with earnest importunity let us make our daily *addresses* to his throne; *asking*, that we may *receive*, *seeking*, that we may *find*; and *knocking*, that the door of mercy may be *opened* to us. And while any of us feel in our hearts the workings of *parental tenderness* towards our infant offspring, let us consider it as a delightful emblem of yet greater *readiness* in our *heavenly Father* to pity and relieve his *children*. 7, 8, 9, 11

May universal righteousness and charity be practised by us in the whole of our behaviour, and may we *always exercise ourselves herein to have a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards men!* (Acts xxiv. 16.) May we avoid all manner of injustice and guard against the sallies of a proud and over-bearing temper! May we be upright and benevolent in all our conduct; and make it our constant care to govern our actions by that most equitable *rule*, Of *doing to others as we* would reasonably *desire they should do to us*, on a change of our circumstances and theirs! Happy those generous souls in whom the bias of *self-love* is so rectified, that they can, in this instance, hold the *balance* between themselves and others with an impartial and unwavering hand! 12

On the whole, let us remember that we ourselves are at last to be tried by the rule by which we are here directed to judge of others, even by *the fruits* which we produce. May God by his grace make the *tree good*, that the productions of it may be found to his glory and the refreshment of all around us, that we may not be *cut down as cumberers of the ground, and cast into the fire!* 20, 17, 18, 19

SECT. XLII. The *way of life*, which our blessed *Redeemer* has marked out for us in such precepts as these, may indeed to corrupt nature appear *rugged* and *narrow*, and *the gate strait* through which we are to pass: but let us encourage ourselves against all the difficulties, by considering that immortal *life* and glory to which they infallibly *lead*. Then shall we, doubtless, prefer the most *painful way* of piety and virtue, though with yet *fewer companions* than we might reasonably expect, to all those *flowery* and *frequented paths* of vice which *go down to the chambers of death*.

Ver. 13 27

SECT. XLIII.

Our Lord concludes his sermon on the mount with a lively representation of the absolute necessity of a practical regard to his precepts. Mat. VII. 21, *to the end.*

MAT. VII. 21.

SECT. XLIII. THESE are the precepts I thought proper to give you; and you must govern your lives by them, if ever you hope to find your account in the most diligent attendance on my ministry: for it is *not every one who saith unto me, Lord, Lord*, who is ready now in words to acknowledge me as his Master, or who at last, with the most passionate and earnest cries, entreats my mercy, that *shall enter into the kingdom of heaven*[a], and be admitted to the complete felicity in which the administration I am now opening shall finally terminate, *but he* only shall be entitled to that privilege, *who* conscientiously *performs* in the main series of his life *the* holy *will of my Father who is in heaven.*

Mat. VII. 21.

MAT. VII. 21. NOT every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 It will be your wisdom to attend to these things; for though you now see me in what may seem a mean and despicable form, the time will certainly come when I shall appear as the Universal Judge: and I now forewarn you, that *many will say to me in that day*, when their eternal state is to be determined, *Lord, Lord, have we not* been employed in distinguished offices in thy church, and been furnished for them even by miraculous endowments? and in pursuance of them, have we not taught and *prophesied*

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not

a *Shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.*] Here *the kingdom of heaven* must signify that *of glory* above; for calling Christ *Lord*, is the very circumstance which constitutes us the subjects of his *earthly kingdom*, or members of his *visible church*. Compare Mat. viii. 11. Luke xiii. 28. and 1 Cor. xv. 50.

b *I never*

SECT. xliii.

Mat. VII. 22.

not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

phesied in thy name? and in the authority of *thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And*, nevertheless, *I will then* openly *declare unto them, I never knew you*, or never approved of your character[b], even when you made the most florid profession[c]; and therefore *depart from me, ye workers of iniquity*[d]; and whatever you that hear me may now imagine, that separation from me will be their everlasting destruction. 23

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock;

Hear *therefore* the conclusion of the whole matter, and seriously attend to it. *Every one*, whoever he be, and how great soever his former irregularities may have been, *who heareth these my words, and doeth them*; or in the main course of his life governs his temper and his actions by them, lays a solid foundation for present comfort and everlasting security and joy: *I will compare him* therefore *to a prudent man who built his house upon a* firm *rock*; 24

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.

And the stormy *rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat* with violence *upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded on a* solid *rock.* And thus shall the good man's hopes be established, when they come, as all must come, to the strictest trial. 25

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand;

But every one that heareth these my sayings, and doeth them not, how constantly soever he may attend them, and whatever zeal he may profess for them, *may* justly *be compared to a foolish man, who*, without any care to secure the foundation, *built his house upon the sand*; 26

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

And the stormy *rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew* with a tempestuous violence, *and struck* directly *on that house; and it fell* at once, *and its ruin was great* and wide as the building had been: a lively emblem of the ruin which will another day overwhelm the unhappy man who trusts to an outward profession and form of godliness, when he does not sincerely and practically regard it. 27

And

b *I never knew you*, or never approved of your character.] The word *knew* is plainly used in this sense, Psal. i. 6. Mat. xxv. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 19. John x. 14. Rom. vii. 15. and perhaps 1 Cor. viii. 3.

c Even when you made the most florid profession.] This is a very remarkable circumstance that is strongly implied in the words, *I NEVER knew you.*

d *Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.*] There is an incomparable dignity in this whole passage, which I have endeavoured a little to illustrate in the *paraphrase*. The poor despised Jesus not only calls God *his Father*, but speaks as the *Eternal Judge* before whom men should beg and plead for their very lives, dreading banishment from him as their final destruction.

SECT. xliii.

And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these excellent *sayings*[e], *the multitudes* that heard him *were struck with amazement at his doctrine.* *For* in this and his other sermons *he was* still *teaching them*[f] *as one that had* a Divine *authority* to dictate in his own name, *and not as the scribes*, their established teachers; who generally contented themselves with quoting the name and authority of some celebrated doctors of the former age, and that frequently to confirm some trifling remark or useless ceremony of human device[g]: whereas the discourses of Christ were weighty and convincing and always delivered with an air of seriousness, dignity and majesty, becoming the great Prophet and King of his church, and the immediate Delegate from God to men.

Mat. VII. 28. 29

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.
29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 28 How justly may *our admiration* concur with *theirs* that heard *these sayings of our Lord*, while we have the honour and pleasure of attending these discourses as the inspired penmen have recorded them, by the assistance of that *Spirit* who was to *bring all things to their remembrance!* Are we not struck with the *authority* of this *Divine Teacher*, so as to *bear our witness* to the *gracious* and edifying *words that proceeded out of his mouth?* (Luke iv. 22.)

24--27 Let us not content ourselves with applauding what we have heard, but let us go away and practise it. Shortly will that *stormy day* arise which must try the *foundation* of our hopes. *God will lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.* How thankful should we be that *God has laid in Zion for a foundation, a chief Corner-stone, elect and precious;*

e *When Jesus had finished these* excellent *sayings.*] This plainly intimates that all *this discourse* was delivered *at once*, and consequently that several passages related by Luke, as spoken at different times, are *repetitions* of it; compare Mat. v. 3, *&c. seq.* with Luke vi. 20, *&c. seq.*—Mat. v. 13, with Luke xiv. 34, 35.—Mat. v. 25, with Luke xii. 58.—Mat. vi. 9, *&c. seq.* with Luke xi. 2, *&c. seq.*—Mat. vi. 20, 21. Luke xii. 33, 34. —Mat. vi. 24, with Luke xvi. 13.—Mat. vii. 1, *&c. seq.* with Luke vi. 37, *&c. seq.*— and Mat. vii. 12—14, with Luke xiii. 24.

f *He was* still *teaching them.*] Beza has well observed, that these words ην διδασκων refer to the continued course and general character of his *teaching*, of which *this discourse* is a noble specimen; indeed so glorious a one, that I persuade myself the reader will pardon my having *paraphrased* it in so copious a manner.

g To confirm some trifling remark, or useless ceremony of human device.] If we may judge of the *teachings* of the *scribes* in Christ's days, by the *Jewish Talmuds*, or even by their *Mishnah*, this was so eminently the character of it, that nothing could be more justly contemptible; and their frigid and insipid *comments* and *lessons* could no more be compared with those strains of Divine eloquence with which *our Lord's discourses* abounded, than a *glow-worm* can be compared to the *sun*.

precious; with an assurance, that *he that believeth on him shall not be confounded!* (Compare Isa. xxviii. 16. & *seq.* and 1 Pet. ii. 6.) *But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon*; lest the weight of his ruin be proportionable to the height of his hopes. (1 Cor. iii. 10.) SECT. XLIII. Ver. 27

We *say unto Christ, Lord, Lord*; but let us remember this will not secure our *entering into his heavenly kingdom*. Whatever be our *profession*, or whatever our *office* in his church, the most splendid and honourable of *our works* will be vain, if we are found *workers of iniquity*; for our *great Master* will then *disown us* as those whom he has *never approved*. Blessed *Jesus!* it will then be in vain to fly to thee with the importunity of prayer, and to repeat the most earnest addresses. We would now, while yet there is room for it, fall down before thee, entreating thee to add the *teachings* of thy *Spirit* to those of thy *word*, that we may be effectually engaged to *do the will of thine heavenly Father*, that we may finally be *confessed* and owned by thee and be admitted *into the joy of our Lord!* 21 22, 23

SECT. XLIV.

Jesus descending from the mount, cleanses a leper who applied to him for a cure. Mat. VIII. 1—4. Luke V. 12—16. Mark I. 40, *to the end.*

MAT. VIII. 1. WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

MAT. VIII. 1.

NOW when Jesus had finished this large and excellent discourse, *as he was coming down from the mountain*[a] on which he delivered it, *great multitudes* of people, impressed and charmed with what they had already heard, *followed him* to the town towards which he went, in hopes of farther instruction and edification. SECT. XLIV. Mat. VIII. 1.

LUKE V. 12. And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold,

And when he was just *in* the confines of *a certain city*[b], in the neighbourhood of that mountain, *behold*, Luke V. 12.

[a] *As he was coming down from the mountain.*] I think this a sufficient warrant for fixing this story where we introduce it; though it be contrary to the *order* in which many learned men have placed it. Neither Mark nor Luke are, in this respect, by any means so express in the connection of it. Yet an attentive reader will observe, that I have not in this instance *transposed* either of them. The erroneous opinion that Luke vi. contained the *sermon on the mount*, and fixed it to an *order* different from Matthew's, is that by which so many have been led into a mistake here. As Luke expresses it thus, I am apt to think it was not Capernaum, which Luke had so often named before; and consequently, that the *mountain*, on which *Christ's sermon* was delivered, lay at some distance from thence; whereas *the plain*, on which some of it was repeated, was contiguous to Capernaum, into which, as Luke says, he entered at the close of it; (see Luke vii. 1. sect. lv. and compare *note* [b] on Mat. v. 1. p. 199.)—I speak of *the confines of this city*, whatever it was; because *lepers* were not allowed to live in towns. Compare Numb. v. 2. 2 Kings vii. 3. 2 Chron. xxvi. 21. and Luke xvii. 12.

[b] *In a certain city:* εν μια των πολεων.]

SECT. xliv.

behold, a man full of leprosy, and dreadfully overrun with that sad disease, *seeing Jesus*, and having been informed of the many miraculous cures which he had done, *came to him*, most earnestly *entreating him* to have pity on his wretched case; *and*, first *kneeling down to him*, he then *fell prostrate* before him, *and worshipped him, saying, Lord*, though my distemper be to human power incurable, (2 Kings v. 7.) yet I know assuredly that, *if thou wilt, thou canst cleanse me* from it.

behold, a man full of leprosy; who seeing Jesus, [MARK came to him, beseeching him; and kneeling down to him,] fell on *his* face, [MAT. and worshipped him;] saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. [MAT. VIII. 2. MARK I. 40.]

Luke V. 12.

Mark I. 41.

And Jesus, pleased with so strong a degree of faith, performed the cure, and did it also in the most condescending manner; for, *being moved with compassion* at so melancholy a sight, he took him aside from the multitude [c], and *stretched out his hand, and touched him, saying unto him, I will* that thy petition be granted, and from this

MARK I. 41. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will, be thou clean. [MAT. VIII. 3, LUKE V. 13.—]

42 moment therefore *be thou clean. And* the almighty power of his commanding word *immediately* took place, and *as soon as he had spoken, the leprosy departed from him; and* it appeared by the alteration of his countenance that *he was* entirely *cleansed* from that loathsome and inveterate disease.

42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.—[MAT. VIII. 3.—LUKE V. 13.—]

43 *And* Jesus had no sooner wrought this miracle, but *having strictly charged him* not to divulge the matter [d], *he dispatched him presently away;*

43 And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;

44 *Saying unto him*, as he departed from him, *See* that at present *thou say nothing unto any one* of my having performed this cure [e]; *but* make it thy first business

44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man; but

[c] *He took him aside from the multitude.*] Else I think there could have been no room for *the charge of secrecy* given below; and the supposition of *such a circumstance*, which certainly happened in another cure (compare Mark viii. 23, sect. lxxxviii.) will be a sufficient answer to the objections which Mr. Whiston has urged against following the *order* of St. Matthew here. See his *Harmony*, p. 107, and *Jones's Vindication*, p. 112—121.

[d] *Having strictly charged him* not to divulge the matter.] Some have supposed, that ἐμβριμησαμενος αὐτῳ implies that *Christ reproved him sharply* for the sin for which he had been visited with this disease, and *threatened him* with the fatal consequence of it if he returned to sin again: and in this case, the probability of what we have supposed is strengthened, that this was spoken to him *in private*, and was delivered in the same manner as the *like caution* was which Christ afterwards gave to the *impotent man*. (Compare John v. 14, sect. xlvi.) But as *the word* is generally used to signify the *giving of a strict injunction*, or *a solemn charge* (as Phavorinus, Suidas and Hesychius, have explained it), I rather chuse to understand it of *the strict charge* that Christ gave to the *leper* not to divulge the manner of his cure, which is expressly mentioned in the following *verse*; and in which sense it is evident that the *same word* is used Mat. ix. 30, sect. lxxii. where the *same charge* is given to the *two blind men* that Christ restored to sight.

[e] *See thou sayest nothing unto any one* of my having performed this cure.] Christ probably designed by this, not only to avoid the shew of any *ostentation* of his miraculous power, but to prevent the *malice of the priests*; who might have been unwilling to *pronounce this leper clean*, and have been ready to *deny the cure* if they were told that he was healed by one they were so strongly prejudiced against; or might perhaps have *censured Christ* as having usurped an *office* that belonged to them,

but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things, [MAT. the gift,] which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. [MAT. VIII. 4. LUKE V. 14.]

business to *go* directly to Jerusalem, and there *shew thyself to the priest* whose office it is legally to pronounce thee clean; *and offer the gift* of birds and lambs, [*and*] all *those things which Moses has commanded for thy purification* (Lev. xiv. 1—32), that it may be *for a testimony to them* that the cure is really perfected; and that, if I should ever be heard of as the author of it, they may see my regard even to the ceremonial precepts of the law. *But* such was the impression that was made upon the leper by so great an instance of Divine mercy to him, and he was so transported with joy at his miraculous deliverance, that *he went out* into the neighbouring country, *and began to publish it much, and to proclaim the matter* wherever he came.

SECT. XLIV.

Mark I. 44.

45 But he went out, and began to publish *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter.—

45

LUKE V. 15. [And] so much the more there went a fame abroad of him; and great multitudes came together [to him from every quarter,] to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. [MARK I. 45.]

And the more Jesus avoided the ostentation of such works, *so much the more there went a fame of him abroad* through all the country; *and great multitudes from all parts came together to him to hear* him preach the gospel, *and to be healed of their infirmities by him.*

Luke V. 15.

MARK I. 45.—Insomuch, that *Jesus* could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places.—

And after some interval of time, the resort to him was *so* great *that he could no longer openly enter into the city* without drawing a multitude of attendants after him, *but was* obliged for a while to be chiefly *without in desert places. And,* to avoid the interruptions of the crowd, *he* frequently *withdrew into the wilderness, and prayed;* chusing in these circumstances to spend some time in more than ordinary devotion, that he might engage a blessing on the truths he had so largely delivered and obtain that success which this eagerness of the people seemed to promise to his gospel.

Mark I. 45.

LUKE V. 16. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

Luke V. 16.

IMPROVEMENT.

OUR souls are overspread with the *leprosy of sin:* and where should we apply for help but to the healing power and recovering grace of the great *Redeemer!* Be the malady ever so deep, spreading or inveterate, we may surely adopt the words of *the leper* before us, and say, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* And

Luke V. 12.

them, and taken upon him to *pronounce a leprous person clean.* Christ therefore would not have him to *make known* the circumstances of his *cure* to any, till he had first of all been with the *priest;* and, upon this account, *dispatched him presently away,* or *sent him off in haste,* that he might reach Jerusalem before the *priests* had any information of this miracle; as seems to be implied in the force of those words in ver. 43, ευθως εξεβαλεν αυτον. See *Grotius* on Mat. viii. 4, and *Lightfoot's Harmony, in loc.*

[a] *And*

SECT. XLV. And how much reason have we to hope this compassion will be moved in our favour, and his power exerted in our cure!

Mark I. 43, 44. If we have received that favour, we are under the obligation of *no command* to *conceal it*. It is, on the contrary, our duty most gratefully to *publish it abroad*, for the honour of our Benefactor, and the advantage of those who may be encouraged to make the same application in humble hope of the same success.

But when will the happy time come that men shall be as solicitous about their *spiritual welfare* as about the *health* of this *mortal body!* Almighty *Physician!* exert thine energy in this instance as a token of farther favours! Convince men of their pollution and danger, and bow their stubborn knee, that it may bend in submissive and importunate supplication!

Mark i. 41. Let the *compassionate air* with which this cure was wrought, be considered by all *spiritual physicians* as a lesson of condescension and tenderness; and let the *modesty*, with which it was conducted engage us to avoid every appearance of ostentation and vain-glory.

Luke v. 16. To conclude; since *Christ* himself found it proper to *retire into a desert place to pray*, when crowds of admirers were flocking in upon him, let it teach those who are engaged in the scenes of *public business* and fill them up with the greatest applause, yet resolutely to command some *seasons* for *retirement*; as remembering, that the more various and important our *public labours* are, the more evidently do we need to draw down succour by ardent *prayer*, that we may be strengthened and prospered in them.

SECT. XLV.

Christ returning to Capernaum heals a man quite disabled by the palsy; vindicates his power of forgiving sins; and calls Matthew the publican to attend him. Mark II. 1—14; Luke V. 17—28; Mat. IX. 2—9.

MARK II. 1.

Mark II. 1. *AND after* Jesus had spent [*some*] *days*[a] in devout retirement, *he* appeared *again* in public,

MARK II. 1.

AND again he entered into Capernaum, after *some* days, and it was

a *And after* Jesus had spent *some days.*] Matthew has recorded so many events *between* the cure of the *leper* and the *paralytic*, that I should not have connected them, had not Mark so expressly asserted, that some of those events, especially *the dispossession of the legion*, happened *long after* (see Mark iv. 35. *note* [a], sect. lxix, and Mark v. 1. sect. lxx). and Luke strongly intimates the same concerning the other story of *the centurion's servant.* (See Luke vii. 1, 2, *&c seq.* sect. lv.) Now I think the honour of the New Testament requires—that when *one of the evangelists* does expressly assert the *order* in which he places facts in question and the *other* does not so expressly assert it (which is the case with Matthew here), the *order* of the *latter*, though an apostle and eye-witness, should be changed out of regard to the *former*. As likewise—that if *none of the three* assert their *order*, that in which *any two* agree to place a fact in question, should be chosen rather than that of *the third*. And on these *two rules* I have proceeded

was noised that he was in the house.

public, and *entered into Capernaum; and it was* quickly taken notice of, and great numbers of people soon *heard that he was in the house* where he formerly dwelt; and as he had been some time abroad, and greatly increased his reputation both by his miracles and preaching, they flocked around him with the greatest eagerness.

SECT. XLV.

Mark II. 1.

LUKE V. 17. And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.

And it happened on a certain day, while he continued here, that, as he *was teaching* the people, [*several*] of the *Pharisees and doctors of the law were sitting by; who were come out of every town of Galilee, and* even *of Judea, and* particularly [*from*] *Jerusalem*[b]; and by appointment met here to attend his doctrine and observe his miracles; at which the governors of the Jewish church began now to be greatly alarmed. But notwithstanding the malicious views with which they came, Jesus went on as usual in his work, *and the* miraculous *power of the Lord was* [*present*] *to heal them*[c] who then applied to him for the cure of their diseases.

Luke V. 17.

And

proceeded in many instances.—But that the *order* of Matthew should be changed for that of Luke, when neither of them *assert* any thing concerning *that order*, is what I think no inference from Luke i. 3, can justify. (See *note* g on that text, p. 22.) Much less can it be allowable expressly to contradict Matthew, for the sake of keeping to the *order* of Luke; which yet most *harmonizers* seem to have done, even when he was relating what passed in his own house and presence. (See *note* a on Mat. ix. 18, sect. lxxii.) Could I have persuaded myself to take such liberties with any of the sacred writers, I should not have doubted to follow Matthew and John in *their order* universally, as Sir Isaac Newton doth, and to transpose Mark and Luke wherever they disagree with either of them; for I cannot observe that *those two* do in any instance disagree with each other in any of the facts in question.—As to the story of the *paralytic* here before us, Mark strongly connects it with that of *the leper*, as happening *some days after it*; though Matthew does not mention it till the *next chapter*, and places several events between them; while Luke according to his frequent custom, mentions it only as happening *on a certain day*. This therefore seems to be the proper place to introduce it, and *Matthew's order* may be changed for the reasons given above.

b *From Jerusalem.*] If this happened, as most commentators suppose, a little before *Christ's second passover* (John v. 1), some of these might be sent from the *Sanhedrim* with a view of gaining some information concerning Jesus, to guide their resolves concerning him at the *ensuing feast*, in which they *persecuted him, and sought to slay him.* John v. 16. It is very probable that the *scribes* at Jerusalem, hearing how expressly he had attacked their interpretation of *the law*, some days before, in his celebrated *sermon on the mount*, (which, so far as we can learn, was the first time he did it) might summon their brethren in the neighbouring country to meet them at Capernaum, in order to attend on the next of *Christ's public discourses*, wherever it might happen to be.

c *The power of the Lord was present to heal them.*] According to the common method of construction this may seem to intimate that the *healing power of Christ* was exerted on *some of the Pharisees:* but as they came from distant parts to attend Christ as *spies*, it is not probable they were *diseased* persons; or that, if any of them being advanced in years might labour under *some infirmities*, they were so *great* and *visible* that *a cure* would be immediately remarked; and least of all can we suppose they had *that faith in Christ* which he required in those whom he intended to heal; (see Mark vi. 5. and compare John vii. 48.) It is more reasonable therefore to conclude, on all these accounts, that this is *one* of those *few places* where the relative *them* is referred to a *remoter antecedent* than that which is immediately before it. Compare in the *original*, Mat. xi. 1. xii. 9. Luke v. 30. John viii. 44. Acts viii. 26. and Heb. xii. 17. See *Glass. Philolog. Sacr.* p. 513—515.

SECT. XLV.

Mark II. 2.

And immediately so many of the neighbouring inhabitants *were assembled that there was not room to receive* [*them*] in the house, or *even about the door;* so desirous were they to hear how Jesus would acquit himself in the presence of such curious, critical and prejudiced inquirers as those that were then sitting around him. *And he preached the word* of the gospel *to them* with his usual plainness, seriousness and authority, and confirmed it by various miracles.

MARK II. 2. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

3 *And behold*, among many others in most deplorable circumstances who were cured by him, *they came unto him, bringing a man seized with the palsy*, and quite disabled by it, so that he was obliged, in order to his being presented to Jesus, to be *laid on a bed*, or couch, *and carried by four* men. *And they endeavoured to bring him in and lay him* down *before him*, hoping that so melancholy a sight would affect his compassionate temper and engage his assistance.

3 And [behold,] they come unto him, bringing [a man] sick of the palsy, which [lying on a bed] was borne of four: [LUKE, and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay *him* before him.] [MAT. IX. 2. LUKE V. 18.]

Luke v. 19.

And when they could not find any way to bring him in, and could not so much as *come near* enough to speak to Jesus, *because of the crowd*, and feared a delay might lose so precious an opportunity, they carried him round to a back passage, by which *they went up to the top of the house* (compare Mark xiii. 15), which, according to the Jewish custom, was made flat (Deut. xxii. 8), *and uncovered the roof* of the apartment *where* [*Jesus*] *was* (which was a room that had no chamber over it), opening a way into the house by lifting up a kind of lattice or trap-door (compare 2 Kings i. 2), *and when they had pulled* [*it*] *up*, or had removed the frame of it to make the passage wider[d], *they let down* [*the paralytic,*] *with his couch, through the tiles*, with which

LUKE V. 19. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, [and could not come nigh] because of the multitude, they went upon the house-top, and [uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken *it* up, they] let him down through the tiling with *his* couch, into the midst before Jesus. [MARK II. 4.]

d *When they had pulled it up*, or had removed the frame, &c.] Ἐξορύξαντες, which we render *broken up*, plainly signifies *pulling out*, (Gal. iv. 15.) And no man in his senses can suppose *the evangelist* meant to say that they *tore up the beams* and rafters of the house upon this occasion; and yet this has been made the foundation of great objections against this story. We have a right to suppose this *removal of the frame* was done *with care;* because the circumstances plainly require such *care*, and common sense would suggest it. Woolston's perverse attack on *this miracle* is as plausible as any thing he has written against *Christianity;* but I have endeavoured, in as few words as possible, to suggest an answer to the chief of his objections; and it may be considered as a specimen of the manner in which I shall proceed in other cases of the like nature: for it would be very improper to enter on the controversy at large here, especially after all the convincing and unanswerable treatises which have lately been written in defence of the *evangelists;* among which I apprehend none more valuable than that called *The Miracles of Christ Vindicated, in four parts;* to which I with great pleasure refer for a larger account of this story, and the others handled by the excellent author of it.

e *They*

SECT. XIV.

which the other part of the roof was paved, *into the midst*[e] of the company assembled, and so laid him *before Jesus. And Jesus seeing their faith,* and graciously excusing the inconveniencies into which their affection had transported them, *said to the man that had the palsy, Take courage, son*[f], for *thy sins are forgiven thee;* and in token of it, I assure thee thy distemper shall be removed.

MAT. IX. 2. And Jesus seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. [MARK II. 5. LUKE V. 20.]

Mat. IX. 2.

But behold, such was the perverseness of *some of the scribes and Pharisees* who *were* then *sitting there,* that on his saying to the man in such an absolute and sovereign way, Thy sins are forgiven thee, they took offence at the expression; *and reasoning in their hearts* upon it, *they said within themselves,* maliciously reflecting on him, *This man* most certainly *blasphemeth: Who is this* that pretends to such an authority? [*and*] *why does this* arrogant *man thus* allow himself to *speak* such *blasphemies* as these? Such a speech as this surely deserves the name; for *who can* undertake to *forgive sins, but God alone,* the awful Majesty of heaven, who is affronted and dishonoured by committing them?

Mark II. 6.

MARK II. 6. But [behold,] there were certain of the scribes [LUKE, and the Pharisees] sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts [*they* said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.]—[MAT. IX. 3. LUKE V. 21.]

7 [Who is this] Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only? [LUKE V. 21.]

7

And immediately, when Jesus, who perfectly well *knew* the secret workings of *their thoughts, perceiving in his* own *mind that they reasoned thus in themselves,* though they did not openly declare their dissatisfaction and censure, *he said to*

8

8 And immediately, when Jesus [knowing their thoughts] perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason

[e] *They let down the paralytic—into the midst.*] What is suggested in the *paraphrase* is the most probable account of the matter, if we suppose *our Lord* to have been in any *covered room* of the house. But Dr. Shaw's hypothesis, which goes on principles which were quite unknown to me till I had the pleasure (since the first edition of this work) of reading his excellent *travels,* seems to me yet more natural. From considering what is now the form of the houses in Barbary and the Levant, he supposes that τὸ μέσον signifies the *court-yard,* round about which the house was built; and that *our Lord* was there. He thinks that, crowded as this *area* was, the bearers of the *paralytic* might get in at the *gate-way* (where perhaps Christ could neither be seen nor heard), and might carry him up *the stairs,* which commonly go up from thence; and being got to the *flat roof* might take down inwards a part of the *balustrade* or *parapet-wall,* and so *let down the bed* with cords by the side of the glazed and perhaps painted *tiles* which might beautify the walls of the house towards *this court.* Many of his quotations from the *ancients* do, in a very agreeable manner, at once illustrate this account, and receive new light from it. See *Dr. Shaw's Travels,* p. 373—380.

[f] *Take courage, son.*] Few can need to be told that *son* is a title of condescension and tenderness by which superiors addressed inferiors that were not properly *their children* (compare Josh. vii. 19. Eccles. xii. 12. and 2 Tim. ii. 1.) as *father* was a correspondent title of respect, (compare 2 Kings v. 13. vi. 21. xiii. 14.) Yet it seems probable, from the use of it here, that the patient was a *young man,* considering that Christ himself was but a little above *thirty;* and if it were so it made the case the more pitiable. Luke uses the word *man* on the occasion; and Christ might possibly use both: as the *apostle* joins *men and fathers,* Acts vii. 2. and *men and brethren,* or, literally, *men, brethren,* Acts i. 16. ii. 19. xv. 7, 15. xxiii. 1. and xxviii. 17.

SECT. XLV.

to them, Why do you reason thus in your hearts, and so maliciously reflect upon me? [*and*] *wherefore do you think* [*such*] *evil things* of what I have now been saying? I shall be at no loss to vindicate the reasonableness of it: for *which is easier to say to this paralytic, Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say* to him, *Arise, and take up thy couch, and walk* away with it? May it not justly be concluded that if I have a power efficaciously to say the one, I may without any usurpation say the other likewise; and declare the sin forgiven, when I can thus miraculously remove the punishment of it? *But that you may know* the case, I put is not a vain presumptuous boast, but *that the Son of man* here *on earth*, though appearing in so humble and obscure a form, *has* yet a Divine *authority to forgive* men's *sins, (he* turns about, and *says to the paralytic,)* O man, *I say unto thee, Arise* immediately; *and* to shew thou art perfectly healed at once, *take up the couch* on which thou liest, *and*, bearing it on thy shoulders, *go thy way to thine own house*, for at this instant I will enable thee to do it.

Mark II. 9.

10

11

reason ye these things [Wherefore think ye evil] in your hearts? [MAT. IX. 4. LUKE V. 22.]

9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? [MAT. IX. 5. LUKE V. 23.]

10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) [MAT. IX. 6. LUKE V. 24.]

11 I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. [MAT. IX. 6. LUKE V. 24.]

Luke V. 25

And immediately he was so strengthened by a secret power which went along with the word, that, believing the virtue and efficacy of it, *he rose up before them all; and taking up the couch on which he lay*, though before he was utterly weak and helpless, *he went forth*, vigorous and cheerful, *to his own house*, humbly *glorifying* and adoring *God* for that extraordinary cure which he had now received.

LUKE V. 25. And immediately he rose up before them [all,] and took up [the bed] whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. [MARK II. 12.—MAT. IX. 7.]

26 *And when the multitude saw* [*it,*] *they were all amazed, and* with united acclamations *glorified God, who had given such* mighty and beneficent *power to men*, and raised up so eminent a Prophet to his people. *And they were filled with* such a reverential kind of *fear* and dread, under the apprehension of so marvellous a proof of the Divine presence among them, that they could not forbear *saying* one to another, *We have* indeed *seen* most extraordinary *strange things to day:* and after all the wonders we have known, *We never* before *saw any thing like it*, nor have we heard of any such event as this in the days of our fathers.

26 And [MAT. when the multitude saw *it,*] they were all amazed: and they glorified God, [MAT. which had given such power unto men;] and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day; [We never saw it on this fashion.] [MARK II. 12. MAT. IX. 8.]

Mark II. 13.

And when the evening advanced, and the day grew cooler, *he went forth again by the sea-shore; and all the multitude* who had before attended in or about the house, and many more who could not get near enough to see and hear what passed there,

MARK II. 13. And he went forth again by the sea-*side;* and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

there, *resorted to him; and he* cheerfully went on with his work, and *taught them* here, after all the former labours of the day. SECT. XLV.

MAT. IX. 9. And [LUKE, after these things,] as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man [LUKE, a publican,] named Matthew, [*or* Levi, *the son* of Alpheus,] sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, [LUKE, and left all,] and followed him. [MARK II. 14. LUKE V. 27, 28.]

And after these things, as Jesus passed out from thence (that is, from the house in which the paralytic had been cured), and was going down to the sea-side, *he saw a man* (who was indeed *a publican*[g], that collected the customs there) *whose name was Matthew,* [*or*] as he was otherwise called *Levi, the son of Alpheus,* the brother of James (compare Mark iii. 18. Luke vi. 15. Acts i. 13.) and he was then *sitting at the custom-house*[h]: *and* calling him to be one of his disciples, *he said unto him, Follow me. And* immediately consigning his books and cash to some careful hand, *he arose, and left all* the care and profits of his employment, *and followed him,* with most grateful acknowledgments of his condescension in admitting a person of his station of life into the number of his stated attendants. Mat. IX. 9.

IMPROVEMENT.

IT is a pleasure to reflect upon it that *Christ* was attended by such vast numbers of people, and that they who were *teachers* of others should themselves sit down to hear him. But it is melancholy to reflect on the perverse purposes with which many of them came; and how few did, on the whole, *receive his word into their hearts,* so as to *bring forth fruit unto perfection.* Curiosity led some, and interest others; and some came to find occasion of *hurting him* whose whole business in life was to *do good.* Yet these low, these vile purposes did not prevent *his preaching* and *working miracles before them,* and being ready to exert his *power* for their benefit. Thus courageous and resolute let us be in the discharge of our duty; thus solicitous, that we may not *be overcome of evil,* but may (which, on the whole, is always in some degree practicable) *overcome evil with good.* (Rom. xii. 21.) Luke V. 17. Mark II. 2 & *seq.*

How industrious were the attendants and friends of this poor *paralytic* to obtain a cure for him! What contrivance, what labour Luke V. 19

[g] *A publican.*] This was a very *odious name* among the Jews, and their employment was attended with so much corruption and temptation, that there were few among them that were honest men; but they were generally persons of so infamous and vile a character, that *publicans* and *sinners* are often joined together as *synonymous terms,* (Mat. ix. 11. xi. 19. and elsewhere.) See the *paraphrase* on Luke iii. 12, p. 101.

[h] *At the custom-house.*] So τελωνιον properly signifies. Some have rendered it *toll-booth;* and I should have followed them had I not apprehended that the word might have suggested some *modern idea,* for which there is in the *original* no foundation.

SECT. XLV. bour did they use to find a proper opportunity to *bring him in*, and *lay him before Jesus!* Ought we not to be as tender and zealous in all the offices of the truest friendship; and to imitate, so far as suits the difference of circumstances, their importunate application and their lively *faith?*

Luke V. 19.

Mat. IX. 2. Theirs had its praise and its reward. *Our Lord* said to this distempered person, *Thy sins are forgiven thee.* He *pardoned all his iniquities*, while he *healed all his diseases* (Psal. ciii. 3). This was a blessing that would render the cure yet incomparably more valuable; and this reviving declaration had *the Son of God* a *power* to add and to pronounce. The *scribes* and *Pharisees*, ignorant and prejudiced as they were, considered such a declaration as *blasphemy*. Their *principle* indeed was right, that *God alone has power to forgive sins*, and it is impious for men to claim it; but their *application* was evidently wrong. The *miraculous effect* plainly shewed the Divine *authority* of the blessed *Jesus*. And he has still *the key of David: he openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth* (Rev. ii. 7.) Almighty Saviour, may we each of us receive from thee *forgiveness of our sins*; and we will not complain though *our sicknesses* should not immediately be removed! Let us *glorify God* who has *given this power to his Son*; and thankfully acknowledge that we are ourselves, in many respects, the monuments both of his *pardoning* and *healing* mercy.

Mark II. 6, 7.

Ver 10 11, 12.

Luke V. 26.

To conclude, let us view with humble wonder and pleasure this farther instance of the condescension and grace of the *Redeemer* in the *call of Matthew*; his *condescension* in calling to so near an attendance and so intimate a friendship, a man who was *a publican*, infamous as that employment was; and his *grace*, which could immediately inspire him with so firm a resolution of *quitting all* the profits of it, that he might reduce himself to circumstances of life as precarious as those of his Divine Master. Many, no doubt, censured him as a rash *enthusiast*, or a *lunatic*, rather than a *sober convert*; but he is even now reaping the abundant *reward*; his loss is gain, and his contempt glory.

Mat. IX. 9.

SECT. XLVI.

Christ goes up to a feast at Jerusalem (generally supposed to be his second passover,) and there cures a poor impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. John V. 1—16.

SECT. XLVI. John V. 1.

AFTER this, there was a great *feast of the Jews*, even the feast of the passover;[a] and *Jesus*,

John V. 1.

JOHN V. 1.

AFTER this, there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

[a] *A feast of the Jews*, even the feast of the passover.] It is certain from Luke vi. 1, *note* b, sect. xlix.) that *a passover* happened soon after the facts recorded in the preceding

SECT. XLVI.

John V. 1.

Jesus, according to his custom, *went up to Jerusalem*, both that he might pay a religious regard to the ceremonial law, and that he might take an opportunity of teaching considerable numbers of people assembled from distant parts and countries where he did not appear in person.

2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep *market*, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda, having five porches.

2 *Now* it is well known, *that there is at Jerusalem, near the sheep-*[*market*][b], *a pool*, or great reservoir of water,[c] *which is called in the Hebrew language, Bethesda*, or the House of Mercy; and was indeed, as the name intimates, a kind of hospital, *having five porticos*, or cloysters,[d] built round it, to accommodate and shelter those who might resort to it for pleasure, convenience or cure: for the water was highly esteemed on account of some medicinal virtues which attended it, and the benefit many had received by bathing in it; and its reputation was greatly advanced, since those miraculous circumstances had been observed, which we shall presently mention.

3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever

3 *In these* cloysters *were laid a great number of sick* and diseased *persons*, such as were either *blind*, or *lame*, or had any part of their body *withered*; who either came or were brought thither in expectation of a cure and lay there *waiting for the moving of the water*. For God, 4 to add the greater lustre to his Son's miracles, as well as to shew that his ancient people were not entirely forgotten by him,[e] had been pleased of

preceding *section*; and most *critics* (after the example of *Irenæus*, lib. ii. cap. 39.) conclude that *this* was it. And indeed, as *the passover* was the greatest of all their *feasts* it is sometimes denoted by the word ἑορτη, even without the *article*. (See Mark xv. 6. and Luke xxiii. 17.) *This chapter* may, at least, be as well introduced here as any where else: and one has little temptation to recede from *this order* in favour of Mr. Manne's singular hypothesis; who supposes that *the feast* here spoken of was the *feast of Pentecost*, and that *this whole chapter* is transposed, and should come in at the end of the *sixth*. How little this is capable of defence we shall endeavour to shew in the *notes* on John vi. 1, and 4. see sect. lxxviii. *note* b and o.

[b] *Near the sheep-market.*] I chuse to retain the common *translation of sheep-market* rather than *gate*; because, if the report of the best *travellers* is to be credited, the place shewn for the *pool of Bethesda* is much nearer *the temple* than the *sheep-gate* could be. (Compare Neh. iii. 1. and xii. 39.)

[c] *A pool*, or great reservoir of water.] The etymology of the word κολυμβηθρα intimates it was *a place to swim in*; so that it seems to me to have been a kind of *bath* like those near Jericho, where Aristobulus was drowned by Herod's order as he was swimming, (*Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xv. cap. 3. § 3.) I do not find any satisfactory proof (though many have asserted it) that the *sheep* to be sacrificed were *washed* here, or that the *blood* of the sacrifices ran into it: yet this is the foundation of that strange conjecture of Dr. Hammond which we shall presently mention.

[d] *Having five porticos*, or cloysters.] It is a very probable thought of *Dr. Lightfoot* (in his *Harmony in loc.*) that the *bason* itself might be in the form of a *pentagon*, and that these *cloysters* might correspond to its *five sides*.

[e] To add the greater lustre to his Son's miracles, &c.] These reasons are suggested and well illustrated in Mr. Calvin's judicious *notes* on this story.

SECT. XLVI.

John V. 4.

of late to perform some supernatural cures at this place. *For at a certain season,* [f] which returned at some particular periods, an unusual motion was discovered in the water; and from the marvellous effects of it, it was rightly concluded that at that time *an angel descended into the pool and stirred the water* [g], by which a healing virtue was whosoever then first after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

[f] *At a certain season.*] Though κατὰ καιρὸν might be sometimes rendered *at that time* (as Rom. v. 6.) and some have therefore thought *the passover,* or *the feast* that was mentioned just before, to be *the season* when *the angel came and stirred the water;* yet, as the words will very justly bear the sense that has been given them in our *translation,* there is no reason why we should suppose it to have only been an *annual miracle,* which would but needlessly increase the difficulty. Indeed the *expectation* of the people intimates it was at *some particular periods,* though probably they were not *fixed* in such a way as that they certainly could tell the *stated times* of their return; at least we know not what they were, nor can it be determined from this *indefinite* expression. And if it be thus taken to refer to *a certain hour of the day,* or *day of the week* (perhaps *the sabbath,* which was the day that they were now expecting it) κατὰ καιρὸν will signify *at every such time,* as κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν *every year,* Heb. x. 1. and κατ' ἡμέραν, *every day,* Acts ii. 46, 47.

[g] *An angel descended into the pool and stirred the water.*] The *late English version* renders it *a messenger,* agreeable to the strange hypothesis of Dr. Hammond; who thinks that *this water* had contracted a *natural virtue* by *washing the carcases and entrails of the sacrifices* in this pool; and that, *on stirring it up,* that virtue exerted itself the more; so that a proper *officer* was appointed for that purpose: a thought so unphilosophical, as well as ungrounded in history and antiquity, that one would wonder how so learned a man could fall upon it.—Mr. Fleming, to avoid the apparent difficulties of the *literal interpretation,* concludes that the latter part of the *third* and the whole *fourth verse* is a spurious *addition* of some ignorant *monk* in the *eighth* or *ninth century;* because that part is wanting in *Beza's manuscript,* and is written by a later hand in the margin of *that* in the *French king's library,* which Lamy in his *Harmony* so much extols. But I cannot acquiesce in *this omission,* since the passage in question is found in *all* the other most celebrated *manuscripts,* as also in the *Syriac version,* and all the rest in the Polyglott bible: and besides this, the *seventh verse* (which none dispute) implies that there was a *miraculous virtue* in the water *after it was troubled,* which extended only to the *first* that went in, and cured his disease, whatever it were; so that the chief difficulties would still remain, were Mr. Fleming's criticism to be allowed, see his *Christology,* Vol. I. p. 13—15.—I cannot here discuss the matter at large; but beg leave, in a few words, to hint at what seems to me the easiest solution of this *greatest of difficulties* in the history of the *Evangelists,* in which, of all others, the learned *answerers* of Mr. Woolston have generally given me the least satisfaction, and which few *commentators* enter into: and I am pleased to find, long since I wrote this *note,* that the ingenious Dr. Pearce agrees with me in the most material circumstances of this hypothesis; (see his excellent *Vindication of Christ's miracles,* p. 68, *& seq.*—I imagine *this pool* might have been remarkable for some *mineral virtue* attending the water; which is the more probable as Jerom tells us it was of a very high colour: this, together with its being so very *near the temple,* where *a bath* was so much needed for religious purposes, may account for the building such stately *cloysters* round it, *three* of which remain to this day; (see *Maundrell's Travels,* p. 108.) Some time before *this passover* an extraordinary *commotion* was probably observed in the water; and Providence so ordered it that the next person who accidentally bathed here, being under some great disorder, found an immediate and unexpected *cure;* the like *phænomenon* in some other desperate case was probably observed on a *second commotion:* and these *commotions* and *cures* might happen *periodically,* perhaps *every sabbath* (for that it was *yearly* none can prove,) for some weeks or months. This the Jews would naturally ascribe to some *angelic power,* as they did afterwards *the voice from heaven* (John xii. 29,) though no *angel* appeared. And they and St. John had reason to do it, as it was the *scripture scheme* that these benevolent *spirits* had been, and frequently are, the invisible instruments of good to the children of men; (see Psal. xxxiv. 7. xci. 11. Dan. iii. 28. and vi. 22.) On their making so ungrateful a return to Christ for *this miracle,* and *those* wrought at the *former passover,* and in the intermediate space, this *celestial visitant* probably from this time returned no more; and

was communicated to it; and *the first* person *therefore, that went in after the stirring of the water, was* instantly *cured*[h] *whatever the distemper was that he* before *was seized with.*

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

And it now happened that *a certain man was* lying *there who had been thirty-eight years disabled* by an illness which had seized his nerves, and taken away the use of all his limbs. 5

6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

Jesus then *seeing him as he lay* by the side of the pool, *and knowing that he had been now a long time* [*in this* melancholy *condition,*] *says to him*, with a view to stir up his attention to himself, and to engage him to reflect on his own helpless state and on the greatness of the mercy he designed him, *Dost thou desire to be cured* of thine infirmity? 6

7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

The poor *disabled man answered him, Sir*, I cannot but earnestly desire it, but am now ready to despair of being so happy; for I am poor as well as lame; and *I have no man to* wait on me and *put me into the pool when the water is stirred; and* my own motions are so slow that, *while I am coming* towards it, *another descends before me*, and enjoys the benefit of the miracle. 7

8 Jesus said unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

Upon this, *Jesus says to him*, with an air of Divine majesty and authority, *Arise, take up thy couch* on thy shoulders, *and walk* away with it, to shew how perfectly thou art recovered. 8

9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked:—

And such virtue attended these words, that *the man immediately became well; and*, leaping up in a transport of wonder and joy, he *took up his couch and walked* away with it to his own house, through some of the most public parts of the city. 9

—And on the same day was the sabbath.

Now on that day that this miraculous cure was wrought, *it was the sabbath:* yet Christ commanded

and therefore it may be observed that though the *evangelist* speaks of *the pool* as *still* at Jerusalem when he wrote, yet he mentions the *descent of the angel* as a thing which *had been*, but not as still continuing (compare ver. 2. and 4.) This may account for the surprising silence of Josephus in a story which made so much for the honour of his nation. He was himself not born when it happened; and though he might have heard the report of it, he would perhaps (as is the modern way) oppose *speculation* and *hypothesis* to *fact*; and, like Dr. Wellwood in a much plainer case, (see his *Letter* relating to *Maillard's cure,*) have recourse to some indigested and unmeaning harangues on the unknown force of *imagination*, or if he secretly suspected it to be true, his dread of the *marvellous*, and fear of disgusting his *Pagan* readers with it, might as well lead him to suppress this, as to disguise *the passage through the red sea*, and *the divine voice from mount Sinai*, in so mean and foolish a manner as it is known he does. And the relation in which *this fact* stood to the history of Jesus, would make him peculiarly cautious in touching upon it, as it would have been so difficult to handle it at once with decency and safety.

[h] *The first that went in—was cured.*] This may well be considered as a circumstance wisely ordered by Providence to illustrate the superior power and goodness of the *Son of God*, who, not at *distant periods* of time, but *every day*, not only performed *a single cure*, but *healed whole multitudes* that resorted to him.

SECT. xlvi.

commanded him, even on that day, to carry his couch, both to shew his own authority and to exercise the faith and obedience of his patient.

John V. 10. *The Jews therefore* who saw him pass by in this manner, *said to him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day;* and therefore *it is not lawful for thee* thus *to carry a couch*, or to bear any burthen whatsoever. (Compare Jer. xvii. 21, 22. and Neh. xiii. 15—19.) How is it then that thou art so presumptuous as to profane this holy day?

10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day: It is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed.

11 But *he answered them* by giving an account of his cure, and only added, *He that* miraculously healed and *made me well*, and restored me with a word to this health and strength, *even he*[i] *said to me, Take up thy couch, and walk* away with it: and I could not question his authority to dis-

11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk.

12 pense with such a ceremonial precept. And upon this, dropping all mention of the cure, and only fixing on what seemed liable to exception[k], *they asked him then, Who is the man that said unto thee*, on this sacred day, *Take up thy couch, and*

12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

13 *walk* away with it? *Now he that was healed did not* at that time *know who it was* that had cured him? *for as there was a crowd of people in the place, Jesus had* modestly *slipped away*[l] among them as soon as he had spoken the healing word.

13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place.

14 But *afterwards, Jesus findeth him in* the court of *the temple, and said unto him, Behold*, by the singular mercy of God, *thou art* now *recovered* to health and vigour; but take heed that thou *sin no more, lest something* yet *worse befall thee;* for thou knowest in thine own conscience that the iniquities of thy youth brought this calamity upon thee[m], and the deliverance thou hast now received

14 Afterwards, Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

[i] *Even he.*] There seems to be this *emphasis* in the word ουτος, in this connection after ο ποιησας. It is very far from being an *expletive*, though few *versions* take any notice of it.

[k] Only fixing on what seemed liable to exception.] They do not ask, *Who is it that has made thee well?* but, *Who is it that bade thee to take up thy couch* upon the sabbath-day? though he had just told them it was the *author* of his *cure* that gave him that *command:* for all that they proposed was, not to hear of any good that had been done to engage their admiration and applause, but to lay hold of some occasion to find fault, to gratify the pride and malice of a censorious temper—I am obliged to Grotius for this delicate remark, which well illustrates their partiality and malignity.

[l] Modestly *slipped away.*] The word εξενευσεν (as Casaubon observes in his learned *note* on the place) is an elegant *metaphor* borrowed from *swimming:* and we may thus observe how well it expresses the easy unobserved manner in which he, as it were, *glided* through them; while, like a stream of water, they opened before him, and immediately closed again, leaving no trace of the way he had taken.

[m] The iniquities of thy youth brought this calamity upon thee.] *Our Lord* seems not merely to have referred to a general notion that *diseases* were the *punishments of sin*, but to glance at some irregularities of the

received will be a dreadful aggravation of thy future guilt. SECT. XLVI.

15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.

The man then informed himself of those that stood by, who it was that spoke to him; and knowing him to be the person to whom he was obliged for his cure, he *went away* from the temple *and told the Jews*, who had before examined him, *that it was Jesus* of Nazareth *who had restored him to health*; expecting, no doubt, by this discovery, to have procured him that honour and respect which was due to so much power and goodness. *And* yet *the Jews* were so far from paying him any just acknowledgments that, on the contrary, they *persecuted Jesus on this account and endeavoured to put him to death*, as an impious transgressor of the law, *because he had done these things on the sabbath-day*: and, in pursance of that unrighteous and barbarous purpose, they brought an accusation against him before the sanhedrim [n], which occasioned the large and excellent apology related in the two following sections. John V. 15.

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day. 16

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT reason have we humbly to adore that *Almighty Being* who *kills and makes alive*, who *wounds and heals!* (Deut. xxxii. 39.) If the *Jews* had cause of thankfulness for this *miraculous* interposition, surely those virtues which God has in a *natural* way bestowed on *medicines*, and that sagacity which he has given to *men* for the discovery of those virtues, are matter of much greater acknowledgment, as the blessing is so much more extensive and lasting. Ver. 4

But how much greater still are our obligations to him for the *blessings* of his *gospel* and the *ordinances* of his worship, those *waters of life* by which our *spiritual maladies* are healed, and vigour restored to our enfeebled souls! Let us humbly *attend them*; yet during that attendance let us look beyond them: for surely the efficacy of this *pool of Bethesda* did not more depend upon the *descent of the angel*, than the efficacy of the noblest *ordinances* depends on that *blessed Spirit* which operates in and by them.

Multitudes were continually *attending* at this *pool*: and *why* then *is the house of God forsaken?* where not *one alone*, but *many*, at the same moment, may receive spiritual sight and strength; yea, and 3 life

the man's *younger years* which, though they were committed before Christ was born (for we are told, ver. 5, that this *disabled* man had laboured under his disorder *thirty-eight years*) yet were perfectly known to him.

[n] Before the sanhedrim.] See the reason for this conjecture in the next *section*, ver. 17, *note* [a], compared with ver. 33.

SECT. XLVI.

life from the dead? Yet, alas! under the *diseases of the soul*, how few *desire to be made whole!* Blessed *Jesus!* if thou hast awakened *that desire* in us, we would adore thee for it as a *token for good;* and would lift up our believing eyes to thee, in humble expectation that thou wilt graciously fulfil it.

Ver. 6

14 *The man* who was lately languishing *on his couch* we quickly after find *in the temple:* and *where* should *they* be found who have been raised up from *beds of weakness*, and brought out from chambers of confinement but *in the sanctuary*, rendering their praises to the *God of their mercies?* How reasonable is *the caution* which *our Lord* gave him there! *Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* May we see *sin* as *the root* of all our *afflictions;* and, by the bitterness of *them*, may *sin* be embittered to us, and our hearts fortified against relapsing into it, especially when we have been *chastised*, and *restored again!*

15 One would have expected that, when this grateful creature published the *name* of his *Benefactor*, crowds should have thronged about *Jesus*, to have heard the *words of his mouth*, and to have received the *blessings of his gospel;* and that the whole nation should have gloried in the *presence* of such a *person*, as far more valuable than the *descent* of a heavenly *spirit* at some particular *seasons* for the cure of their diseases, or even the *abode* of an incarnate *angel* among them would have been. But instead of this, behold the malignity of our fallen nature, and the force of stubborn
16 prejudice! They surround him with an hostile intent; they even *conspire* against his beneficial *life;* and for an imagined transgression in a point of *ceremony*, would have *put out* this *light in Israel.* Let us not wonder then if *our good be evil spoken of:* (Rom. xiv. 16.) Let us not wonder, if even candour, benevolence, and usefulness, do not wholly disarm the enmity of some; especially of those who have been taught to prefer *sacrifice to mercy;* and who, disrelishing the genuine contents of the *gospel*, naturally seek occasion to slander and persecute the *professors*, and especially the *defenders* of it.

SECT. XLVII.

Christ vindicates the miracle which he had wrought at the pool on the sabbath-day, and solemnly declares the dignity of his person and office. John V. 17—30.

JOHN V. 17.

SECT. XLVII. THE miracle which he had just performed was a plain evidence of his Divine authority and power: *but Jesus* being questioned by the Jews, and, as it seems, examined before their most solemn

John V. 17.

JOHN V. 17.

BUT Jesus answered them, My Father worketh

worketh hitherto, and I work.

solemn council[a], for the cure he had wrought on the sabbath-day, he took the opportunity of declaring at large the dignity of his person, the evidence of his mission and the absolute necessity of faith in him to their eternal salvation[b]; while, in reply to the malicious charge which they brought against him, he *answered them* as follows: *My* heavenly *Father*, in the administration of his providential kingdom, *worketh* continually, from the beginning of the world *even till now;* and upon sabbath-days, as well as others, he exerts that unremitting and unwearied energy which is the life of the creation: *and*, in like manner, *I also work*, in obedience to the intimations of his will and in subserviency to his glory. And in this very action I have given you so visible a proof that I am directed and assisted by him, that you ought humbly to acquiesce in it, without presuming to cavil at what is so evidently Divine, or to limit the majesty of heaven by those rules which he has prescribed to his creatures.

SECT. XLVII.

John V. 17.

18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father; making himself equal with God.

18 But upon hearing this suggested by our Lord in vindication of himself, they were so far from yielding to the argument, that, *for this* very *reason*, the resentment of his adversaries was increased; and being *therefore* more incensed against him than before, the rulers of *the Jews endeavoured the more* eagerly *to put him to death, because* (as they imagined) *he had not only violated the sabbath, but had* now *also* gone so far as even to have *called God his own Father*[c], in *so* peculiar and appropriating a sense *as* in effect *to make himself equal with God;* while he thus argued his own right to work on the sabbath-day, from God's working upon it; though this was evidently no argument with respect to mankind in general, nor had ever been pleaded by the greatest of the prophets in such a view.

Jesus

[a] Before their most solemn council.] I here follow Mr. Fleming's opinion (in his *Christology*, Vol. II. p. 296) which seems to be confirmed by ver. 33; and there appears a great deal of additional propriety and beauty in the discourse when it is considered in this view.

[b] He took the opportunity of declaring at large the dignity of his person, &c.] Christ had hinted at several of these things in his *conference with Nicodemus* (John iii. 13—21, sect. xxvi.) who had probably reported them to his brethren. But he here expatiates more largely on some; and, no doubt, if Nicodemus, as a member of the *council*, was now present, he heard him with great pleasure and improvement.

[c] *Called God his own Father.*] This is the plain and literal sense of the *original*, πατέρα ἴδιον. The whole nation of the Jews thought *God their Father* (John viii. 41.) and they could not therefore have accounted it *blasphemy* to have used the *phrase*, had they not interpreted it in so high and appropriating a sense.

[d] *The*

SECT. xlvii.

John V. 19.

Jesus therefore, to explain the matter more fully to them, and to leave them yet more inexcusable in their malicious opposition to him, *answered and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you*, and do most faithfully and solemnly declare, That *the Son* of God, great and glorious as he is, now acts in an avowed subjection to the authority of the Father and *can do nothing of himself*[d], in pursuance of any distinct schemes or separate interest of his own, *unless he see the Father doing it*[e] or perceive him intimating it as his pleasure that it should be done: *for whatsoever* are the *things* that *he* (that is, the Father) *doeth, even these likewise doeth the Son* in a most intimate conjunction with him; at all times cheerfully complying with his purposes and esteeming it his honour always to be employed in his service. *For the Father loveth the Son, and* that with so entire an affection, that he *sheweth him all things that he himself doeth*[f], letting him into the secret of his councils, and teaching him in the most wonderful and Divine manner to act in prosecution of them; *and he will shew*, or point out to *him* far *greater works than these* which he has hitherto performed; which shall hereafter be accomplished by him, *that you may* all be filled with *wonder*, though you will not be

19 Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

[d] *The Son can do nothing of himself.*] I cannot forbear mentioning a remarkable *note* of the learned *Elsner (Observ.* Vol. I. p. 307, & *seq.)*, in which he shews by a great variety of instances, that the later *heathen writers* seem to have ascribed to Minerva, as the daughter of Jupiter, many things which our *sacred scriptures* speak of Christ as the Son of God.

[e] *Unless he see the Father doing it.*] Whether *our Lord* here means in the general, *unless he see it to be correspondent to the Father's scheme*; or whether he refers to any peculiar *Divine impulse* which he sometimes felt upon his mind, leading him to exert his miraculous power in this or that instance, I cannot certainly determine: but rather incline to the *latter*, which might also be comprehended in ver. 17.—The *particle* εαν μη, which is exactly the same in signification with ει μη, is here also used in a less proper sense. See the *note* on John xvii. 12. sect. clxxix. and compare John viii. 38, sect. civ.

[f] *Sheweth him all things that he himself doeth.*] The editors of the Prussian Testament say, that the word δεικνυσιν, which we have rendered *sheweth*, signifies here to *teach* or *form to* any thing; as a *master forms his scholar* to do what he himself doeth, and teaches him the secrets of his art or profession: but I cannot acquiesce in this sense, as expressing the whole meaning of the phrase. It rather refers to the ample and comprehensive *knowledge* which *the Son* has of the whole plan of *the Father's* councils, in all their mutual relations and dependances; whereas the *prophets* and the *apostles* too, had, in comparison of this, but very limited and contracted views. Compare Isa. xl. 10, where it is said (as we have no room to doubt) of Christ, and probably in this sense—*his work is before him*—Dr. Whithy refers αυτω to *the Son*; and understands it as if it had been said, *Whatever the Son doeth, is by the direction of the Father*: but I think the genius of the *Greek language* would not in that sense have allowed the repetition of αυτω, but it would rather have been said, παντα α ποιει δεικνυσιν αυτω: not to insist upon it, that the sense in which I have explained it is much nobler, and not so nearly the same with what Christ had said in the *preceding verse*.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

22 For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

23 That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

be open to conviction. You have now seen the cure of one who had been long disabled by a disease, but I have not yet raised any from the dead: yet you shall quickly see, that it is not for want of power; *for as the Father*, whenever he pleases, *raises up and animates the dead, so also* you shall have sufficient evidence that *the Son animates whom he will.* Nor is it to be wondered at, that he should have so great a power lodged in him; *for the Father* now in his own person *judges no man, but has given* the administration of *all judgment to the Son*, before whom all men are at last to appear, and by whom they are to be assigned to their final and eternal state. And this important power God has committed to me[g], *that* notwithstanding the humble form in which I now appear, *all may* be engaged to *honour the Son even as they honour the Father* himself; yielding an unreserved homage and obedience to him, as what is necessary to approve their duty and fidelity to God: for *he that*, in such a circumstance, and on such a discovery, *honoureth not the Son*, as worthy of the highest veneration, *honoureth not the Father that sent him*; but affronting him in the person of so dear and so great an ambassador, must expect to be treated as an enemy and a rebel.

This is a truth of the utmost consequence to your final happiness, and therefore I insist the more largely upon it; see then that none of you presume to pass it slightly over; for *verily, verily, I say unto you*, and solemnly declare it in the presence of you all, *He that heareth my word* with an attentive regard *and* truly *believeth in him that sent me, hath everlasting life:* he is already intitled to it, yea, it is already begun in his soul; *and* he shall shortly possess it in its full perfection, and *shall not come into condemnation* for any former

22 23 24

[g] This important power God has committed to me.] Though *our Lord* here speaks of himself in the *third person*, yet afterwards, in ver. 30, *&c. seq.* he speaks in the *first*: and common sense would teach all that heard him, that by *the Son* he here meant *himself.* Now I appeal to any unprejudiced person to judge, whether *our Lord's* making such a declaration as *this* before the *Jewish rulers*, and probably in *full council*, was not far more liable to exception, than merely his calling the temple *his Father's house* (John ii. 16.) at his *first passover*; in the same manner as he long before had done, in calling God *his Father*, even when he was but *twelve years old*, (Luke ii. 49.) So little is there in Mr. Manne's argument from the text. (See *note* c on John ii. 16, p. 137.)—And it is also to be remembered that, according to *Mr. Manne's Scheme of the Harmony*, he makes *this* to have happened about *ten months before Christ's death*, and long *before* many of *those charges* to his disciples, *not to make him known*; from whence this gentleman argues, that the forecited words in John ii. 16, could not be spoken till his *last passover.*

SECT. XLVII.

former offences; *but is passed from* that state of *death* in which men naturally are, *to* a state of *life*, security and felicity. Think not this an incredible assertion; for *verily, verily, I say unto you*, and in the strongest terms renew the important declaration [h], That *the season cometh, and is now* just at hand, *when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear [it] shall* immediately *live*; for within these few months there shall be some dead bodies raised to life by the word of his power (See Mark v. 41. Luke vii. 14. John xi. 43. and compare Mat. xxvii. 52, 53), and many souls that are dead in sin shall, by his grace, be quickened and made spiritually alive [i]. *For as the Father has* originally and essentially *life in himself, so he has also given to the Son, that he should*, for these purposes of glorious and Divine operation, *have* a principle of *life in himself* to be communicated unto whom he will. (See 1. Cor. xv. 45.) *And he has given him authority*, not only to quicken men now, but *also to execute* final *judgment, because he is the Son of man*; and as he has voluntarily humbled himself to so lowly a form (see Phil. ii 5—11), God will accomplish to him all those glorious predictions which represent him as possessed of universal and perpetual dominion and coming in the clouds of heaven in that day when the judgment is set and the books are opened. (See Dan. vii. 9—14. Phil. ii. 8, 9. and Heb. xii. 2.)

And therefore, *wonder not at this* which I have now declared concerning the resurrection of a few, shortly to be expected; *for the hour is coming in which all that are* dead and buried now, and all that shall then be lying *in the graves*, though mouldered away and consumed there, *shall hear his voice, And shall come forth* out of

John V. 24. 25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear, shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth,

h Renew the important declaration.] These *repetitions* of this solemn asseveration are by no means vain, considering the vast importance of the truth; and how incredible it would appear, that he who stood before them in so humble a form, was in reality the *Lord of Life*, and the universal *Judge*. See *note* g on John i. 51, p. 129.

i Some dead bodies raised to life, and many souls made spiritually alive.] I express it thus ambiguously, because I am something doubtful, whether it may not refer to the *conversion* of sinners by *Christ's ministry*, rather than the *resurrection* of a few by his *miraculous power*. It is well known, sinners are often represented in scripture as *dead* (Mat. viii. 22. Eph. ii. 1. v. 14. 1 Tim. v. 6. and Jude, ver. 12), and if the expression οι ακουσαντες, is to be taken, as we render it, with the most literal exactness, for *they that hear*, or they, and they alone, that so attend unto the *voice* of Christ as to believe in him—it will then limit it to this sense; which seems also favoured by ver. 24, where *death* plainly signifies a *state of sin and condemnation*.

k I seek

forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

of the dust, *they that have done good, to the resurrection of* eternal *life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of* final *damnation.* See to it therefore, that you shew a due regard to him before whom you yourselves are to stand; and do not rashly condemn a Person from whose lips you are to receive your decisive sentence. Not that any corrupt bias of partial resentment will be brought into the proceedings of that day, or into any of my conduct; for *I can of myself do nothing*, but now act by a delegated power as the minister of a righteous God: and therefore *as I hear, I judge*, pronouncing according to the evidence of facts before me; *and* upon this account it must appear that *my judgment is just; because I seek not any* distinct *will* or separate interest *of my own*[k], *but the* wise and holy *will of the Father who sent me;* which is, that every man should be treated according to his real character, and be the object of favour or of wrath, as his temper and conduct have been upright or wicked.

SECT. xlvii.

John V. 29.

30 I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

30

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH what humble prostration of soul should we bow before the *Lord Jesus Christ* while we read such words as these! Though he appeared under the *form of a servant;* and as *man* and *mediator*, confessed a holy subjection to *his Father* and *his God;* yet is he *his own*, his *only-begotten Son*, the *Son whom he loves*, whom he *honours*, whom he commands *all men* to *honour even as himself*, and to whom such *power* and *authority* are committed, that he is the principle of *life* and the administrator of *judgment.* Let us adore the wisdom of such a contrivance, that he who *humbled himself* thus low, should be so *highly exalted.* Let us labour to secure an interest in him; treating him with that submission, duty and obedience, which becomes at once the *divinity* of his *nature* and the *dignity* of his *office.*

Ver. 19, 20

23

26

27

May we be enabled by Divine grace so to *hear the voice* of his gospel, that we may arise to a *life* of holy obedience; that we may another day *hear him* with joy calling forth our sleeping dust, and *arise to the resurrection of life;* while those that have despised and rejected him, shall find themselves the helpless prisoners of his justice, and with reluctance and terror *come forth to the resurrection of damnation!*

25

28

SECT.

k *I seek not any* distinct *will* or separate interest *of my own.*] This limitation the sense evidently requires. See Heb. x. 9, 10. Mat. xxvi. 39. and *note* h on Mat. xii. 7. sect. xlix.

SECT. XLVIII.

Christ having declared to the Jews (and, as it seems, to the Sanhedrim), the dignity of his person, office and character, goes on to represent the proofs of his mission; and concludes his discourse with proper admonitions and cautions. John V. 31. *to the end.*

JOHN V. 31.

SECT. XLVIII.

John V. 31.

OUR Lord proceeded in his discourse to the Jews, and said, I have certainly entered a very high claim, and represented myself as a person of great dignity and authority; nor do I see it without sufficient proof. Indeed *If I bear* this *witness of myself* alone, it must be acknowledged, that *my testimony is not* immediately [*to be admitted as*] *true*[a]: you have a right to insist on other evidence; and a variety of it arises from the testimony of John, from the power of my miracles, from the testimony of the Father and from innumerable passages in your own sacred writings.

JOHN V. 31.

IF I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

32 I would then first observe that, besides what I have told you of myself, *there is another* of undoubted reputation and veracity *that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he beareth of me is true* and credible; and well remember by the happiest tokens, the great fact on which it especially turned[b]: nor can you reasonably take upon you to dispute it; for the person I refer to is John the Baptist, whom your whole nation agreed to reverence as a prophet:

32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

33 And you know, that *you* yourselves *sent* messengers on purpose from your own court *unto* this *John* (John i. 19—27, sect. xx.), *and he*, in the most express terms, *bore* a faithful and honourable *testimony to the truth* of what I have now attested and referred to, assuring you that he saw

33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.

34 the Spirit in a visible form descend upon me. *I do not indeed receive* the chief *testimony* on which I

34 But I receive not testimony from man; but

a *Is not [to be admitted as] true.* That this is the sense of the word *true* here, is very evident; and appears in part from comparing John viii 13—17. sect. ciii.

b The great fact on which it especially turned.] The propriety and spirit of *our Lord's* expression, *I know that the witness which he beareth of me is true*, is much illustrated, by supposing that here is an oblique reference to that great event, *the descent of the Holy Spirit on Christ at his baptism*; on which John so expressly grounded the *testimony* he bore to *Christ*, the very *next day* after their *messengers* came to him, who probably staid some time to make their remarks on his preaching and conduct. (See John i. 29—34. sect. xxi.) And the blessed effects of *this effusion* on Christ still continued, and incessantly wrought in him.

c *For*

but these things I say, that ye might be saved.

I rest the credit of my mission, *from man; nevertheless, I say these things* to you, on your own principles, out of a tender and compassionate concern for your conviction, *that you*, who are now conspiring against my life, *may be saved* from that destruction which he foretold as the portion of those who should reject me, and which the greatest of them shall not be able to escape, (Mat. iii. 10—12, sect. xvi.) *He was* indeed *a burning and a shining light* (Ecclus. xlviii. 1), who, to his bright and distinct knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, joined a most fervent zeal in bearing his testimony to them; *and for a while you were disposed greatly to rejoice in his light*[c]; but you did not express that continued regard to his preaching which at his first appearance you seemed to promise.

SECT. xlviii.

John V. 34.

35 He was a burning and a shining light; and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

35

36 But I have a greater witness than *that* of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

I will not therefore insist farther on this topic, *but* proceed to other evidence. And *I have* indeed *a testimony* which is much *greater* still *than* [*that*] *of John; for the works* of wonder and mercy *which the Father has assigned* and given in commission to *me, that* according to his wise and gracious purposes *I might accomplish them* among you, *even these* miraculous *works which I* daily *perform*, are also witnesses in my behalf, and *bear* a most convincing *testimony to me, that the Father hath sent me* as his Ambassador to men, with the most ample commission to reveal his will.

36

37 And the Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me: ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

And indeed I may say, with the greatest propriety, that by these miracles, as well as by the public testimony that he gave me at my baptism, *the Father who has sent me* has with the strongest evidence confirmed my mission and *has himself borne witness to me*: nor have you any reason to dispute the testimony that he thus hath given me [*though*] *you have never either heard his voice, or seen his form*, as being one whom no man hath seen nor can see; for he has testified the same concerning me in his word, where he has spoken of me in the clearest manner. But, notwithstanding the submission you

37

c *For a while you were disposed greatly to rejoice in his light.*] *Our Lord* might speak thus of John, though he was yet living, as *his light* was now in a great measure extinguished by his *imprisonment*; so that the argument from *this text*, for *transposing this chapter*, seems inconclusive. Had the *sanhedrim*, as some have supposed, imprisoned John before he was seized by Herod (see the *preface* to the Prussian Testament, p. 244), *our Lord* would hardly have failed to reprove them for it on so natural an occasion as this.

SECT. xlviii.

you profess to his authority, you will not be persuaded to receive the testimony he has given: *and* after all that he has said, it is still evident

John V. 38.

that *you have not his word* cordially *abiding in you*[d], nor do you shew a due regard even to those former revelations which you acknowledge as Divine; *for* notwithstanding all the reasons that are there given to induce you to it, *you do not believe him whom he had sent* with a much fuller and clearer discovery of himself than any of his former messengers have brought.

38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

39 *You* make it your employment and your study to peruse and *search the scriptures*[e], and enter into deep enquiries concerning the contents of them; *because you* very rightly *apprehend that you have* the doctrine of *eternal life in them*, that they contain the promises, and instruct you in the way of obtaining it: *and these* now *are [the very writings] which* in numberless passages *bear* 40 a most important *testimony to me*. *And yet* the obstinacy of your hearts is such, that notwithstanding you profess so great a regard for them, *you will not come to me, that you may have* that eternal *life* which they direct you to obtain in this method, but rather chuse to die under the force of your inveterate prejudices.

39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.

40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

41 I speak of your coming to me: but let me remind you that it is not out of an ambition of drawing multitudes about me, to follow and applaud my teaching; for the whole of my conduct proves that *I receive not glory from men*[f].

41 I receive not honour from men.

42 *But* I say it out of a tender regard for your instruction and reformation; for notwithstanding your distinguished profession of piety, and the eminent

42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

[d] *You have not his word abiding in you.*] Some would render it, *You have not his LOGOS*, that is, me *residing among you* for any continuance of time (see Mr. *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 65,) and refer it to Christ's making so *short an abode* at Jerusalem: but I prefer the more obvious sense. Compare John xv. 7.

[e] *You search the scriptures.*] There is a known *ambiguity* in the word ερευνατε, which may justify either *this translation* or the *common one*; nor is it very material which is preferred, I thought the *following words*, which express their high opinion of the *scriptures*, rather suited the *former*; and it is exceeding probable that, at a time when the Pharisees were so impatient of the Roman yoke, they would with great diligence *search the sacred oracles* for *predictions* relating to the Messiah; though it is too plain they had an unhappy bias on their minds, which prevented the good effects which might have been expected from that inquiry, had it been impartial.—It is also well known, that refined *criticisms* on their *sacred writings* made the most fashionable branch of learning among the Jews; in comparison of which, *profane literature* was held in great contempt, and indeed by many of their *zealots* in great abhorrence: see *Joseph. Antiq. Jud.* lib. xx. cap. *ult.* § *ult.* and *Mr. Biscoe's* Sermons at *Boyle's Lecture*, p. 89, 90.

[f] *I receive not glory from men.*] The whole series of this discourse excellently shews how far *our Lord* was from soothing the vanity of great and learned men, in order to obtain their favour.

John V. 42.

eminent station in which you are placed, *I know you*, and have observed it for some time concerning you, *that you have not the love of God in you*, that great and only principle of a true religion and happiness. For *I am come* to you *in my Father's name, and* with evident credentials from him; yet *you receive me not*; which, if you had really loved him, you would undoubtedly have done: whereas *if another should come in his own name*[g], without such credentials, and set up a scheme of temporal grandeur and dominion, *him you would* readily *receive*, in pursuit of those worldly principles which, though directly contrary to the love of God, yet bear the rule in your corrupt hearts. But *how* indeed *can you believe* in me, and fall in with such an humbling and self-denying scheme as that of my gospel, *while*, with an ambitious emulation, *you are receiving honour of each other*[h], *and seek not that* true *honour which* [*comes*] *from* the approbation of *God alone*, and from the testimony of your consciences in his sight.

43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh* from God only?

Nevertheless, remember this, that you will another day appear self-condemned for this your infidelity: and *do not think that*, to convict you in his presence, *I will accuse you to the Father*; it will not be necessary that I should do it; for even now, *that Moses, in whom you trust* as your great law-giver and patron, *is* (as it were) *your accuser* before God[i], and charges you with being regardless of him as well as of me. *For if you had believed Moses*, and really had that regard to him which you profess to have, *you* likewise surely *would have believed me; for he wrote concerning me* in many most memorable passages[k]. *But* I will now conclude my discourse;

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust:

46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me.

47 But if ye believe not

[g] *If another should come in his own name.*] Some think here is a reference to Barchochebas, a noted *impostor* in the following age, for adhering to whom the Jews were severely chastised by Adrian. (*Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. 6.) But it is certain there were many other *pretended Messiahs*, who wrought *no miracles*, and yet met with a much better reception from the Pharisees than Christ did; and I doubt not but Christ meant to include, at least, all those who appeared while the *sanhedrim* existed.

[h] *You are receiving honour of each other.*] This has much more spirit, if we consider it as applied to the members of the *sanhedrim*, who had such distinguished *titles of honour*, than if we only take it as spoken to a *mixed multitude*, who might happen to surround Christ in the temple: the taste of the *Populace* seldom lies that way.

[i] *That Moses, in whom you trust, is your accuser.*] This is one of the most expressive passages that can be imagined, in which Moses, their great law-giver, is represented as looking down with *indignation* upon these *elders* who gloried in being the most distinguished of *his disciples*; and seeing how injuriously they treated Jesus the great Prophet, turning himself to God with a severe *accusation* against them, and urging *his own predictions* as an aggravation of their inexcusable infidelity.

[k] *He wrote concerning me* in many most memorable passages.] Christ might perhaps intend

SECT. XLVIII.

course ; for *if you do not believe his writings,* which are daily in your hands, and the Divine authority which you so strenuously assert, *how shall* I expect that, under the power of such prejudices, *you* shall *believe my words?*

not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

John V. 47

When our Lord had thus spoken he withdrew ; and they were so overawed with the majesty of his presence and the unanswerable force of his discourse, that they did not attempt to seize or detain him.

IMPROVEMENT.

How various is the evidence of our *Redeemer's mission,* and with what pleasure should we trace it in the *testimony* which *John* bore, the *miracles* which himself wrought, the *testimony of the Father* to him and the *predictions* which the *prophets* uttered and recorded!

Verse 32--37

39 To confirm our faith in all, let us be daily *searching the scriptures,* as the oracles of God and the great fountains of life and salvation. We profess a regard to them : may that regard never be our condemnation! or the blessed *penmen* witness against us, as *Moses* 45 against those who gloried in his writings, and yet wanted a true faith in them!

In proportion to the degree in which we are convinced of the *truth of Christ's religion,* let us set ourselves to cultivate the *temper* 41 which he exercised. He *sought not glory from men,* but made his *Father's will* the rule of his actions, and his *Father's honour* the end of them. Let us not greedily catch at *human applause,* but 44 aim at an infinitely nobler object, even *the honour that cometh from God alone,* the only true judge of actions and characters, because the only discerner of hearts.

May we have not only *his word* in our hands, but *his love re-* 42 *maining in us ;* that thereby our natural aversion to the methods of his saving grace in the gospel may be subdued, that notwithstanding the obstinacy of our degenerate wills we may *come unto* 40 *Christ that we may have life!* May we *receive him* with the greatest readiness, as *coming* to us *in his Father's name :* and not only *for* 43 *a season rejoice in his light,* but stedfastly *continue in his word,* as *made known to all nations for the obedience of faith ;* that the advantages which we enjoy may not be found to aggravate our guilt and to condemn us with the unbelieving *Jews!*

Christ

intend to refer to what Moses had written, —of *the seed of the woman,* (Gen. iii. 15,) —of *the seed of Abraham, in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed,* (Gen. xxii. 18.)—of *the Shiloh, who should come to gather the people,* (Gen. xlix. 10.) and of *the Prophet whom God should raise up unto them from among their brethren,* (Deut. xviii. 18,),—as well as to the many *ceremonial institutions* which had their final accomplishment in him.

a Returned

Christ shewed the tenderness of his compassion even in the severity of his rebukes, and spoke these awful and awakening words that these his unjust and inveterate enemies *might be saved.* May they be the *power of God unto our salvation!* as they will be, if we *believe in him whom he hath sent.* SECT. xlviii. 34 33

SECT. XLIX.

Christ vindicates his disciples from the censure of the Pharisees, for rubbing the ears of corn in their hands as they passed through the fields on a sabbath-day. Luke VI. 1—5; Mat. XII. 1—8; Mark II. 23, *to the end.*

LUKE VI. 1.

AND it came to pass, [at that time,] on the second sabbath after the first, that [Jesus] went through the corn-fields; and his disciples [were an hungered.]

LUKE VI. 1.

AFTER the preceding conference with the Jews, our Lord departed from Jerusalem, where he had met with such an ungrateful reception, and returned towards Galilee[a]; *And it came to pass, that about this time, on the first sabbath after the second [day of unleavened bread*[b]*,] Jesus,* SECT. xlix. Luke VI. 1.

[a] Returned towards Galilee.] We may reasonably conclude this, because both Mark and Luke mention his being there quickly after this story. Compare Mark iii. 7, and Luke vi. 12, 13 with vii. 1.

[b] *The first sabbath after the second day of unleavened bread.*] So I venture to render δευτεροπρώτῳ, the word used by Luke; yet not without much hesitation; for it is so singular an expression, that (as Erasmus long since did) I despair of seeing its sense exactly ascertained.—Could Theophylact, or his very learned followers, Scaliger, Lightfoot and Whitby, produce any instance of δευτεροδεύτερον being used for the *second,* or δευτεροτρίτον for the *third* of the *sabbaths* between the *passover* and *pentecost,* I should entirely acquiesce in the *translation here given;* which supposes this was the *first* of those *seven sabbaths* which followed the *second day of unleavened bread,* from whence the *fifty days* to *pentecost* were to be computed; see Lev. xxiii. 15, 16.—On the other hand, could the great Grotius or his followers, Woltzogenius and Brennius, have produced an instance in which πρωτοπρώτῳ, or πρωτοπρωτον occurs, there would have been reason to conclude with them, that there were *three prime sabbaths* which were accounted sabbaths of peculiar solemnity; the *first,* that after *pentecost;* and the *third,* that after the *feast of tabernacles.*—For want of sufficient authorities to support either of these interpretations, *Sir Isaac Newton (on Proph. p.* 154), after Epiphanius and Beza, has advanced another yet less probable than either; which is, that it was the *second of the two great feasts of the passover;* as we call *easter-day* itself *high easter,* and its *octave, low easter,* or *low sunday.* But though the *seventh day of unleavened bread* was to be *a holy convocation,* yet *the law* expressly allowed the Jews to *dress victuals* on it (Exod. xii. 16); which would have afforded so direct an answer to the Pharisees' objection, that one can hardly suppose Christ would have failed to urge it.—On either of these *two last* suppositions, it must be rendered, *the second prime sabbath:* but as I could not translate it all, without fixing it one way or the other, I chose the former rendering, for these *two* reasons: (1) Because I cannot find that there is any Divine command to observe the *sabbaths* which follow the day of the *three great feasts,* and particularly that of *pentecost,* with any such peculiar solemnity as to afford sufficient reason for this distinguishing title; though large sacrifices were to be offered *every day* for *seven days* after the *passover,* and for *eight* during the *feast of tabernacles;* which are distinctly prescribed, Numb. xxviii. 16—25, and xxix. 12, *& seq.* And (2) Because, considering what Philo and Isidorus assert, and Josephus intimates, of *corn being ripe* in Judea about the time of the *passover* (see *Petav. Var. Diss.* lib. ii. cap. 11. *Plin. Nat. Hist.* lib. xviii. cap. 18, and *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. iii. cap. 10. § 5), and *the law of* presenting the *loaves* made of *new wheat* on the day

SECT. xlix.

Luke VI. 1. *Jesus*, attended as usual by a train of followers, (who had been with him at the feast), *went through the corn-fields; and* as *his disciples were hungry, and* the barley was now ripe, they *began, as they went, to pull off* some of *the ears of corn*[c]; *and rubbing them in their hands* to break off the beards and the husk, *did eat* the grain.

hungered.] and began [MAR. as they went,] to pluck the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands, [MAT. XII. 1. MARK II. 23.]

Luke VI. 2. *And some of the Pharisees*, who were employed by the rulers to follow him from place to place as malicious spies on all his discourses and actions, *when they saw it*, were offended at the time and circumstances of the action[d], and reproving his disciples, *said to them, Why do ye* thus gather and rub out the grain; for *that* is a kind of servile work, *which it is not lawful* for

2 And certain of the Pharisees [when they saw *it*] said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath-days? MAT. XII. 2.]

Mat. XII. 2. any one *to do on the sabbath-days? And* that they might involve their Master also in the same charge, though he did not himself join with them in it, *they said to him, Behold,* these *thy disciples* in thy very presence, *do that which it is not lawful* for any one *to do on the sabbath;* and wilt thou permit it to pass without a reproof?

MAT. XII. 2. [And] they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath-day. [Mark II. 24.]

Luke VI. 3. *And Jesus said in answer to them, Have ye,* that value yourselves so much on your acquaintance with the sacred writings, and set up for the expositors of them to others, *never read that which*

LUKE VI. 3. And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David

day of *pentecost* (Lev. xxiii. 17), it seems probable the *harvest* was generally concluded *before that day.* (See also *Scalig. Emend. Temp. Proleg.* p. 25, 26, and lib. vi. p. 557, 558.—I suppose these considerations, or the authority of such great names, may have determined most *harmonizers* to introduce *this story* immediately *after* the *fifth chapter* of John; nor do I see any reason to vary from them herein. And the order would be the same if Reland's conjecture were to be admitted, that the πρωτοπρωτον was the *first sabbath* in the *civil,* and the δευτεροπρωτον the *first* in the *ecclesiastical* year. (See *Reland. Antiq. Heb.* lib. iv. cap. 9.) But this is a conjecture, which has so little to support it even in *hypothesis,* as scarcely to deserve a mention.

[c] *To pull off* some of *the ears of corn.*] The word σταχυας, here used, may indifferently signify *ears* of any kind of *grain;* but it might probably be *barley,* that being first ripe in those parts. (Compare Exod. ix. 31, 32.) Sir Isaac Newton lays a great deal of stress on this, for fixing the *time of Christ's death:* concluding *this passover* must happen *late,* and that it was *two years* before *that* in which *our Lord* was crucified; and consequently that *Christ's death* must be fixed to such a time that *the passover two years before it* may be a *late one.* But I fear the argument is not so conclusive as one could wish, considering with what ingenuity and labour it is pursued. For that great man seems to have forgot how expressly Maimonides and the other rabbies assert that the Jews did not always fix their *passover* by the *vernal equinox;* but, in case of a backward spring, added an *intercalary month* between *that* and *Abib.* (See *Lightfoot's Hor. Heb.* on Mat. xii. 1.) If this be credible it shews how little we can ascertain the *Jewish passovers* by astronomical calculations; and if it be not, why did Sir Isaac proceed in his computations on those rules for the translation of feasts, which we have only by late *rabbinical tradition?* See *Bochart. Hieroz.* lib. ii. cap. 50.

[d] Offended at the time and circumstances of the action.] The law so expressly allowed to *pluck ears of corn* as one passed through a field, that, malignant as they were, they pretended not to find fault with the thing itself (see Deut. xxiii. 25.) but they were perverse enough to think this a kind of *reaping* and *dressing* the grain, which was indeed forbidden on the *sabbath.*

[e] *Abiathar*

David did, when [MARK, he had need and] was an hungred, [MARK, he] and they which were with him? [MAT. XII. 3.—MARK II. 25.]

4 How he went into the house of God [MARK, in the days of Abiathar the high priest,] and did take and eat the shew-bread, and gave also to them that were with him, [which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them] but for the priests alone? [MAT. XII. 4. MARK II. 26.]

which David did in his extreme *necessity, when he and they that were with him were hungry? How he went into* the tabernacle, which is *the house of God, in the days of Abiathar*, who was afterwards *the high priest*[e], *and* then officiated for his father Ahimelech; (see 1 Sam. xxi. 3, & *seq.*) Have ye forgot that this faithful servant of God, this man after his own heart, *took and eat the shew-bread*, which had that very day been taken from the holy table, *and gave* it *also to those that attended him; which it was neither lawful for him nor them to eat*, nor even for the Levites themselves, *but for the priests alone?* Yet in this case their necessity was judged a sufficient excuse for dispensing with the observance of such a ceremonial institution; see Lev. xxiv. 6—9.)

SECT. XLIX. Luke VI. 3. 4

MAT. XII. 5. Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath-days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

Or have ye not read in the law, that by those sacrifices which are appointed for the sabbath-day, and some of them peculiar to it, *the priests* themselves, who minister *in the temple*, are obliged to perform very servile works *on the sabbath-days*, in making up the fires, killing, slaying and dressing the sacrifices, and the like, by which others would be justly reckoned to *profane the sabbath; and* yet, doing it with an immediate reference to the service of God, they *are* accounted *blameless*, and really are so. Mat. XII. 5.

6 But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple.

Now I say unto you, That there is [*something*] *greater than the temple here*[f], and of much more importance than the service of it. My disciples therefore may surely be vindicated on such an occasion as this, when in attendance upon me, in 6

[e] *Abiathar*, who was afterwards *the high priest.*] If our present reading (which Beza suspects, though older than the *Syriac version*) be allowed as genuine, here is a remarkable instance of a person being designed by an *office* which he did not bear till *after* the date of the event referred to; in like manner as Cyrenius (Luke ii. 2.) is called *governor of Syria* because he was so *after the enrolment*. It seems indeed that Ahimelech was *high priest* when David took the shew bread, though in all the story he is only called *the priest*; and as it is merely an arbitrary supposition that the father was sometimes called Abiathar, or the son of Ahimelech, it seems impossible to defend the received reading otherwise than by supposing with Grotius, that as Abiathar was a much more celebrated person than his father, *our Lord* mentions his name in preference to the other. He was probably present, and, for any thing we certainly know, his aged father might act by his advice in the affair referred to; which if he did, it was exceeding proper to mention him here.

[f] *Something greater than the temple.*] So many *manuscripts*, with Theophylact, read μειζον, *something greater*, instead of μειζων, *one greater*, (see Dr. *Mill in loc.*) and in this view the opposition seems so natural that I prefer *this reading*. *Our Lord* might perhaps point to *his own body*, the noblest *temple* of the Deity (compare John ii. 21, sect. xxiv.) or it might refer to the *work* then going on: but the former sense is much more natural.

SECT. xlix.

in prosecution of my service, they do what is so much less laborious than the offices which you allow there in the priests.

Mark II. 27. *And he said unto them* farther on this occasion, *The sabbath was made for* the benefit of *man*, subservient to the rest and relief of his body, as well as to be spent in religious improvement; *and not man for the* observation of the *sabbath*, or of any other ceremonial institution whatsoever.

MARK II. 27. And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.—[LUKE VI. 5.]

Mat. XII. 7. *But if ye had known* the intent of that scripture, Hos. vi. 6. and had considered *what this meaneth*, "*I require mercy and not sacrifice*[g]; "that is, I always prefer acts of charity to matters of positive institution, when in any instance they interfere with each other[h];" *you would not have condemned the innocent*, as you have now done, merely for rubbing out a handful of corn to refresh them in my service.

MAT. XII. 7. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

8 You are therefore, on the whole, greatly to blame to censure them; and would be so, if they had only my dispensation for what they do, and were defended by no farther arguments; *for the Son of man* is a person of so great dignity and authority, that he indeed *is Lord*[i] *even of the*

8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath-day. [MARK II. 28. LUKE VI. 5.

g *I require mercy, and not sacrifice.*] So ὅτι ἔλεος θέλω evidently signifies when it expresses the *will* of a superior; and this the *original* Hebrew word imports, which seems here to answer to that *modern phrase* used by princes, *Such is our pleasure.*

h I always prefer acts of charity, &c.] I must here repeat a very obvious remark, because the sense of so many important scriptures depends upon it, viz. that according to the genius of the Hebrew language, one thing seems to be *forbidden* and another *commanded*, when the meaning only is that the latter is *greatly to be preferred* to the former. The text before us is a remarkable instance of this; as likewise Joel ii. 13. Mat. vi. 19, 20. John vi. 27. Luke xii. 4, 5. and Col. iii. 2. And it is evident that Gen. xlv. 8. Exod. xvi. 8. John v. 30. vii. 19. and many more passages, are to be expounded in the same *comparative sense*. A late ingenious writer says, "Our Lord does not compare *moral* and *positive* duties together here, but only the commandments of men with the commandments of God." But it is plain the series of *our Lord's* arguments here is intended to prove that *circumstances of necessity* dispense with some *ceremonial observances*, which were in the general commanded by God; and manifestly goes upon this foundation, that *ceremonial institutions* being the *means* of religion, if circumstances occurred in which they interfered with the *end* of it, they were *suspended* of course; and *when* this is the case, the conscience of particular persons is to judge as in the sight of God.

i *For the Son of man is Lord*, &c.] The author of the *new translation* renders it in Matthew, *The sabbath is subservient to man*; though he paraphrases it as it stands in Mark, *The Son of man has a power of dispensing with the law of the sabbath*; which is undoubtedly the true sense: for I cannot find that *the Son of man* does, in the New Testament, signify any one but Christ; and were the words (which are exactly the same) to be translated in Mark as he has rendered them in Matthew, they would be a mere repetition of ver. 27, *The sabbath was made for man*, &c.—It is worthy of our notice that Matthew introduces these words with γαρ, *for*, and Mark with ωστε, *therefore*, or *so that*; and both connections may be justified. Yet as it is hardly to be imagined *both* were equally intended, I look upon this to be a considerable proof that the sacred writers were not always critically exact in the use of their *particles*: a remark which I apprehend to be of great importance both for clearing their sense and vindicating their character. Whoever considers the ambiguity of many of those Hebrew

the sabbath [*itself*] [k]; and he may hereafter give you far more surprising instances of his power over it. SECT. XLIX. Mat. XII. 8.

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH pleasure we observe the zeal which these attendants of *Christ* express, who chose on a *sacred festival* to expose themselves to *hunger* as well as toil, rather than they would lose the benefit of his instructions, which, like the heavenly *manna* on the day preceding the *sabbath*, were *then* poured out in a *double* plenty. But what numerous auditory is so candid as to contain none who come, like these *Pharisees*, with a desire to cavil rather than to learn! The malignity of *their temper* sufficiently appeared in taking *exception* at so small a circumstance: *hypocrites* that could thus *strain at a gnat* and yet *swallow a camel*, (Mat. xxiii. 24.) scrupling to *rub out a few grains of corn*, while they sought to *devour widows' houses*, and were, under this grave *mask* of the strictest piety, *inwardly full of rapine and all wickedness!* (Luke xx. 47. and xi. 39.) Ver. 1 2

Let us attend to the *apology Christ* makes for *his disciples*. It speaks his own *authority*, as *greater than the temple*, and *Lord of the sabbath*: and well might he, *in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, without the least presumption, use such language as this. It likewise declares much of the *genius of his religion*, which deals not in *forms* and *ceremonies*, and *dispenses* even with *rituals* of a Divine appointment, when *humanity* and *benevolence* interfere with the observance of them. Since *God will have mercy rather than sacrifice*, let us abhor the perverseness and wickedness of those who sacrifice *mercy* itself, not merely to *ceremonies* of a *Divine original*, but to their own arbitrary invention, superstitious dreams and precarious though confident determinations. Let us practise habitual *caution* and *candour*, lest, before we are aware, we *condemn the innocent* and the pious, and become guilty of what is much more displeasing in the sight of God than the faults which a peevish and censorious temper may fancy it discovers in our brethren. 6, 8 7

SECT.

Hebrew particles which correspond to the Greek, will find little reason to wonder at it. Compare Luke xi. 36. sect. lxiv. and *note* d there.

k *Even of the sabbath itself; καὶ τῦ σαββάτου.*] This certainly implies that *the sabbath* was an institution of great and distinguished importance; and may perhaps also refer to that signal authority which Christ by the ministry of his *apostles* should exert over it, in changing it from the *seventh* to the *first day of the week*.

SECT. L.

Christ, on a following sabbath cures a man whose hand was withered; and vindicates that action from the cavils of the Pharisees. Luke VI. 6—11. Mat. XII. 9—15. Mark III. 1—7.

LUKE VI. 6.

SECT. I.

Luke VI. 6.

WE have just mentioned an instance of the Pharisees cavilling at a very innocent action of the disciples; we shall *now* proceed to another, in which they charged our Lord himself with the violation of the same sacred rest, in a yet more malicious and unreasonable manner. For *it came to pass also, when he was departed from thence*[a] (that is, from the town in whose neighbouring fields they had rubbed out the ears of corn), *that on another sabbath he entered again*, as he was used to do, *into the synagogue*, in some other city which lay in his way through Galilee, *and taught* his heavenly doctrine there. *And behold*, a remarkable circumstance occurred; for *there was a man present, whose right hand was withered*, the nerves and sinews of it being so shrunk up that it was entirely useless.

LUKE VI. 6.

AND it came to pass also, [when he was departed thence,] on another sabbath, that he entered [MARK, again] into the synagogue, and taught: and [behold,] there was a man [MARK, there,] whose right hand was withered. [MAT. XII. 9, 10. MARK III. 1.]

7 *And the scribes and Pharisees*, who were there also present with him, *watched him*, to observe *whether he would* again *heal on the sabbath-day; that they might find* some new matter for *an accusation against him*, having succeeded so ill in the former attempt, and plainly perceiving that his reputation grew more and more among the people.

7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath-day; that they might find an accusation against him. [MARK III. 2.]

8 *But* when the synagogue-worship was dispatched, and our Lord's sermon was also concluded; he, *knowing* the malignity and wickedness of *their thoughts* and views, instead of being discouraged by the design they had against him,

8 But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. [MARK III. 3.]

[a] *When he was departed from thence.*] There can be no doubt as to the *connection* of *this story* with the *preceding*, in which all the *evangelists agree*; and indeed had not Luke told us it was *on another sabbath*, the words of Matthew would have led us to imagine it had been the *same day*. Perhaps he might spend most of the week in the town to which the fields mentioned above belonged.—Beza's favourite *manuscript*, now at Cambridge, as well as one of Stephens's, adds the following words in Luke, immediately before this story: *The same day, seeing a certain man at work on the sabbath, he said to him, O man, if thou knowest what thou doest, thou art happy; but if thou dost not know it, thou art cursed, and a transgressor of the law.* This is undoubtedly *a spurious addition*; for had the Pharisees heard any thing like this from Christ, they would have followed him no farther, and observed him no more, to find matter even of *capital accusation* against him. And indeed it goes on a very false supposition that the *ceremonial law* was already abrogated.

[b] They

him, *said to the man who had the withered hand*, SECT. *Rise up* from thy seat, *and stand in the midst* of I. the assembly: *and he* cheerfully *arose, and stood* Luke in the most conspicuous part of the synagogue, VI. 8. hoping to receive the favour of a cure.

MAT. XII. 10.—And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-days? that they might accuse him.

And as the Pharisees saw what Jesus intended, Mat. *they asked him, saying, Is it* then to be taken for XII. 10. granted that it is *lawful to cure on sabbath-days*, as well as at other times? And they put the question in that general form [b], on purpose *that they might* have an opportunity to *accuse him*, and not from any desire of instruction. *And* 11 *he said to them*, in reply to that ensnaring question, *What, man is there of you*, in all this assembly, *who, if he have but one sheep that on the sabbath-day should fall into a pit* [c], and be in danger of perishing there, *would not lay hold of it* without delay, *and* make no scruple of attempting presently to *raise it up* from thence, though it would be a work of some labour and difficulty?

11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?

Now I leave it to your own consciences to re- 12 flect *how much is a man better than a sheep? So that* you must, on your own principles, allow that *it is lawful to do well*, and to perform the lovely acts of charity and mercy [d] even *on sabbath-days*: and you must own, for instance, that if a man should fall into a pit, it would be lawful on that day to pull him out; and consequently too, it must be lawful, if he labours under a disease, to apply any proper remedies for his cure; much more then must it be so to cure a person, without any laborious application merely by speaking a word.

12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath-days.

LUKE VI. 9. Then said Jesus unto them,

Then Jesus said farther *to them*, To end the Luke controversy in a few words, *I will ask you one* VI. 9. *thing* more; *Is it lawful to do good on sabbath-days,*

[b] They put the question in that general form.] The word Θεραπευειν is very extensive, and properly includes all the *care*, *labour*, and *attendance*, which the case of any distempered or wounded person can require; as I apprehend our English word *cure* also does; though, through the poverty of our language, we are forced to apply it to those miraculous effects which were so instantaneously produced by the healing word of our blessed Redeemer.—What *Syriac word* they might use I know not; but it is plain the question is put in very *general terms*, which best favoured their base purpose of founding an *accusation* on *our Lord's* answer.

[c] *If ye have but one sheep that should fall into a pit.*] The *common version* is more *literal*; but that which I have given plainly suits our *English idiom* better, and appears to me perfectly faithful, for the stress of the thought cannot lie on supposing a man to have *but one sheep* in all; but in this, that *one only fell into the pit*, yet for the comparatively small value of *that one* he would not scruple to undertake the *labour* of helping it out *on the sabbath*.

[d] *To do well*, and to perform the lovely acts of charity and mercy.] This is the meaning of that phrase, καλως ποιειν; in the use of which the *evangelist* might intimate an appeal to some remainders of a *moral sense*, distinguishing the natural beauty of such actions, which these worst of men could not totally eradicate.

[e] Secretly

SECT. L

Luke vi. 9. Mark III. 4.

days, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy [*and*] even *kill* the innocent? thereby secretly referring to the purpose of destroying his life [e], which, while they were thus scrupulous about the observation of the sabbath, they were even then forming in their hearts. *But they were silent;* being convinced in their own minds of the reasonableness of what he said, and stung with secret remorse of conscience, yet unwilling to confess what they saw and felt.

I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to [kill, *and*] destroy *it?* [MARK III. 4.]

MARK III. 4. But they held their peace.

5 *And when he had looked around upon them all with* a just *indignation, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts*, and for that condemnation and ruin which he knew it would bring upon them, as well as for the mischief it might occasion to others, *he says to the man* that laboured under the calamity which was mentioned before, *Stretch forth thine hand. And* accordingly *he stretched it out, and* was not only strengthened for that particular motion of which he was before incapable, but *his hand was* perfectly *restored*, and was *well* and strong *as the other.*

5 And when he had looked round about [LUKE, upon them all] with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. [MAT. XII. 13.—LUKE VI. 10.]

6 *And the Pharisees* were so incensed at the affront which they imagined they had received in our Lord's neglecting their censure, and intimating his knowledge of the evil purposes of their hearts, that they were no longer able to bear the place; but *went out* of the synagogue, *and immediately took counsel* together *with the Herodians* [f], who, different as their civil and religious

6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel

[e] Secretly referring to the purpose of destroying his life.] I appeal to every reader of taste whether there be not another kind of spirit in these words, on this supposition of such a reference, than we could find in them, by any forced attempt to prove, that *not to have cured a withered hand* in these circumstances would have been, in a sense, *destroying life.* Such cold and unnatural *criticisms* have been a great dishonour to *scripture*, and I persuade myself the authors of them have not seen whither they tended.

[f] *With the Herodians.*] The Herodians were a *sect* of men, who, so far as we can judge by their name, seem to have distinguished themselves by their zeal for the family of Herod; whom they might perhaps compliment with the title of the Messiah, though it is plain that neither Herod himself nor the generality of the people fell in with this extravagant opinion: (see Mat. ii. 1—4.) However, from their high regard to Herod, these men would naturally be zealous for the authority of the Romans, by whose means Herod was made and continued *king;* and it is probable, as Dr. Prideaux conjectures (*Connect.* Vol. II. part 2, book 5, *ad fin.*) that they might incline to conform to them in some particulars which the law would not allow of; and particularly in the admission of *images*, though not in the *religious*, or rather *idolatrous*, use of them. Herod's attempt to set up a *golden eagle* over the *east gate of the temple* is well known (see *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xvii. cap. 6, (al. 8. § 1—3.) these complaisant courtiers would, no doubt, defend it; and the same temper might discover itself in many other instances. On all these accounts they were most diametrically opposite to the Pharisees; so that the conjunction of their counsels against Christ is a very memorable proof of the keenness of that malice which could thus cause them to forget so deep a quarrel with each other.

sel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. [MAT. XII. 14.]

LUKE VI. 11. And they were filled with madness, and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

MAT. XII. 15.—But when Jesus knew *it*, he withdrew himself from thence, [with his disciples to the sea.] [MARK III. 7.]

ligious notions were from those of the Pharisees joined with them in their enmity to Christ, and zealously united in a conspiracy *against him, how they might destroy him*, either by a public prosecution, or a private assassination. *And they were filled with madness* and rage against him, *and discoursed* over the point at large *with each other*, to determine *what they might do to* prevent the growing reputation of *Jesus* among the people, and to put a period at once to his labours and his life. SECT. I. Luke VI. 11.

But Jesus knowing [*it*,] that nothing might hinder him from fulfilling his ministry, *withdrew himself from thence*, and went *with his disciples to the sea* of Galilee, on the shore of which he frequently preached to the people. Mat. XII. 15.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT *actions* are so fair and lovely, that *malice* cannot turn them into reproach! What *characters* are so unblemished, what so exemplary, that *uncharitableness* cannot revile and condemn them! While the eyes of distressed *multitudes* were turned to *Christ* as their only Physician and most valuable Friend, the eyes of the *Pharisees* are continually *upon him for evil*: and they behold his wondrous *miracles*; not for their own *conviction*, but that they may, if possible, turn them into the means of his *destruction*. So ineffectual are the most obvious and demonstrative *arguments*, till Divine grace conquer men's natural aversion to a Redeemer's kingdom and *captivate* their hearts *to the obedience of faith!* Luke VI. 7, 9, 11

To have reviled and dishonoured *Christ* and to have endeavoured to prevent the success of his ministry, had been a daring crime: but these desperate wretches *conspire against his life*; and, different as their principles and interests were, form a transient friendship to be cemented by his blood. Blessed *Jesus!* well mightest thou say, *Many good works have I shewn you, and for which of them would you* murder *me*; (*John* x. 32.) Mark III. 6.

What *reasoning* could be more plain and forcible than this which *our Lord* used? and yet, like *deaf adders*, they *stop their ears*, and harden their hearts against it. Inhuman creatures, that were more concerned for the safety of a *sheep* than the happiness of a *man!* Yet would to God that unworthy temper had died with them; for surely there are those, even among *professing Christians*, who regard their *cattle* more than even the *souls* committed Mark XII. 11, 12.

SECT. I. mitted by Providence to their care, and therefore, no doubt, more than *their own* too!

Mark III. 5 The *indignation* which *Christ* felt on this occasion was a just and amiable passion. Happy they, whose *anger*, like his, is only awakened by *sin*, and burns only to destroy that *accursed thing?*

Mat. XII. 13 The malice of the *Pharisees* did not restrain the benevolence of our compassionate *Saviour*, nor deprive the poor *patient* of his *cure*. Such let our conduct be! Let us *not be overcome of evil:* let not the most unjust censures, or the most malicious opposition break our spirits so as to prevent us from doing our duty.

Luke VI. 11 If others are *mad* with persecuting rage, let us pity them; and let all their fury against the cause of God be improved as a motive to excite our most zealous and courageous endeavours for its service.

SECT. LI.

Christ retiring to the sea side, cures great multitudes with such modesty and gentleness as was agreeable to Isaiah's prophetic description of his conduct. Mark III. 7—12. Mat. XII. 15—21.

MARK III. 7.

SECT. li. IT was before observed that Jesus retired from the synagogue, where he had cured the man

Mark III. 7 that had a withered hand, and went with his disciples to the sea-shore; we now pursue the story[a], *and* add, that he was there attended by *a great multitude* of people who *followed him* 8 *from Galilee, and* even *from Judea: And* particularly *from Jerusalem*, where that extraordinary cure lately wrought at the pool of Bethesda, and that excellent defence with which it was followed, had greatly increased his popularity: nay, there were some that came yet farther from the south, *and* were *from Idumea;* the natives of which country being long since obliged to become Jews[b], had many of them seen Jesus at the feasts; *and* others too attended him

MARK III. 7.

AND a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea, [MAT. XII. 15.—]

8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan, and they about Tyre,

a We now pursue the story.] The connection of *this section* with the *preceding*, both in Matthew and Mark, is express: and I desire the reader would once for all observe, that when I give no reason for placing the *sections* in the *order* in which they stand, it is because I am not aware there is any difficulty or controversy about them. And their *following each other* in the *evangelists*, though without any express note of exact *connection*, I always reckon a good reason for continuing that *order*, unless there be some weighty argument inducing us to change it.

b Obliged to become Jews.] That Hyrcanus had obliged them to this about *an hundred and fifty years before the birth of Christ*, we are assured by the account Josephus gives us, *Antiq.* lib. xiii. cap. 9, (al. 17) § 1.

c *Rushed*

Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

him *from* the eastern regions which lay *beyond* *Jordan; and* also *a great multitude* from the western parts, even as far as *from the neighbourhood of Tyre and Sidon, having heard what great* and glorious *things he did, came to him.*

SECT. li.

Mark III. 8.

9 And he spake unto his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him, because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

And he spoke to his disciples, that a little vessel should be in readiness near him, because of the multitude that was now flocking around him; *that they might not throng* in upon *him* in a manner which would have been very inconvenient to him, and would have prevented great numbers of them from seeing and hearing what passed. 9

10 For he had healed many, [and he healed them all,] insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. [MAT. XII. 15.]

For he had healed many and [*indeed*] *all* that applied to him; *so that they* eagerly *rushed in upon him*[c], even *as many as were under any* remarkable *scourge* of God's afflicting hand, *that they might touch him*, and so partake of that healing virtue which went out from him. 10

11 And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

And they who were possessed with *impure spirits, as soon as* ever *they saw him*, though they before were perfect strangers to him, immediately *fell down before him* in a posture of submission and homage; *and* such a terror seized the demons that possessed them, that they *cried out*, with all the appearances of horror and confusion, *saying*, We know that *thou art* the Messiah, *the Son of* the most high *God*[d]. 11

12 And he straitly charged them that they should not make him

But our Lord preserved the usual modesty of his temper on these occasions as well as others; *and*, being desirous to occasion as little disturbance and offence as possible, *he charged them with strictness*, and some appearance of severity[e], *that they should not make him known:* for, intending to visit several of those parts himself, he 12

[c] *Rushed in upon him.*] This the phrase επιπιπτειν αυτω yet more strongly expresses; which signifies that they were ready to drive each other upon him, so that those nearer him could hardly stand, being pressed forward by those behind.

[d] *Thou art* the Messiah, *the Son of* the most high *God.*] The Leicester *manuscript* reads it, Συ ει ο Θεος, υιος του Θεου; *Thou art God, the Son of God:* which I mention, not that I think the authority of *that* sufficient to justify a change in the received reading, but only as one remarkable instance, among many others which I could easily give, of the negligence with which *that manuscript* was collated by Dr. Mill's correspondent; since *this reading*, memorable as it is, is omitted by the *Doctor*. But I hope the world will ere long be favoured with a far more exact account, not only of *that manuscript*, but of several others much more valuable than that, some quite omitted by Dr. Mill, and others very imperfectly collated. This we are encouraged to expect from the *reverend*, accurate and indefatigable Mr. Wasse of Ayno, whose obliging readiness to assist me in this work I do myself the honour of acknowledging with the utmost gratitude.—His death, since the publication of the *first edition* of this volume, is a calamity to the learned world long to be lamented.

[e] *He charged them with strictness*, and some appearance of severity.] This we may take to be included in the force of that expression, πολλα επιτιμα αυτοις.

SECT. li.

he was unwilling to give an unnecessary alarm to his enemies; and he always chose to avoid every degree of ostentation.

him known. [MAT. XII. 16.]

Mat. XII. 17. So *that* in him *it might be* evidently seen to be *accomplished which was spoken by Isaiah the*
18 *prophet*[f] (Isa. xlii. 1—4), *saying*, "*Behold* the great Messiah, *my Servant whom I have chosen* for the great work of redeeming and saving my people; he is *my Beloved, in whom my* very *soul does* entirely *acquiesce* as every way qualified to perform it: *for I will put my Spirit upon him; and he shall proclaim judgment*, that is, the great law of religion, righteousness and truth, even *to* the most distant of
19 *the heathen* nations. *He shall not contend* with martial violence, *nor cry out* in a clamorous and turbulent manner; *nor shall any one hear his voice in the streets*, as giving a loud and dis-
20 quieting alarm: But he shall manage his administration with so much gentleness and sweetness, with so much caution and tenderness, that (as it is proverbially expressed) *he shall not break* even *a bruised reed* or cane, which snaps asunder immediately when pressed with any considerable weight; *nor* shall he *extinguish* even *the smoking flax*[g], or the wick of a lamp, which, when it is first beginning to kindle, is put out by every little motion: with such kind and condescending regards to the weakest of his people, and to the first openings and symptoms of a hopeful character, shall he proceed, *till he send forth judgment to victory*[h], or till he make his righteous cause gloriously triumphant

MAT. XII. 17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

18 Behold my Servant whom I have chosen, my Beloved in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

19 He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

[f] *By Isaiah the prophet.*] I refer the learned reader to Grotius and Heinsius for the difference between the *original* and the *quotation* here, which chiefly lies in the clause of *sending forth judgment unto victory.*

[g] *He shall not break a bruised reed, nor extinguish the smoking flax.*] The immense pains Zegerus and some other *commentators* have taken to shew on what accounts either the Pharisees or the *multitudes*, or the Jews or Gentiles, might be compared to *a bruised reed* or *smoking flax*, seem very wide of the purpose. They seem to be only *proverbial expressions* to signify a person of a most *gentle character* (as I illustrate them above), and something resemble *the proverb* among the Spanish Jews to the same purpose; *If such a one were to walk on a pavement of eggs he would not break them:* (see *Pol. Synops. in loc.*) To suppose, with Dr. Lightfoot, [redacted] make so much noise as breaking *a bruised reed* does, or pour water on *smoking flax*, sinks the idea too low.

[h] *Till he send forth judgment to victory.*] Isaiah says *to truth:* and we may take the words to signify *till he make* the cause of *righteousness* and *truth* completely *victorious*; or, *till* at length *he take a righteous* and speedy *vengeance* on the Jews for rejecting him, to verify and fulfil the *truth* of his predictions.—I have expressed it in a manner which may suit *either*; but I think the *former* much preferable, since then the words describe the general character of Christ's administration in all ages, and especially as it best agrees with the sense of the *original*, *He shall bring forth judgment unto truth; He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set*, or established, *judgment in the earth:* which phrases explain each other, and the sense of each is abridged here.

[i] *And*

21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

triumphant over all opposition. *And* this gentle and gracious administration shall charm mankind in so sensible and irresistible a manner, that *the Gentiles shall confide in his* illustrious *name*[i]; and distant, yea barbarous nations, shall seek their refuge and salvation in his grace; though Israel may ungratefully reject him, and therefore be justly abandoned by God."

SECT. li.

Mark XII. 21.

IMPROVEMENT.

SURELY *face* does not more exactly *answer to face in water* than the character of *Christ* drawn by the *prophet* to his temper and conduct as described by the *evangelists*. How should *Zion rejoice*, and the *daughter of Jerusalem shout*, that such a *King cometh unto her, meek and having salvation!* (*Zech.* ix. 9.) Let us with pleasure trace his *gentle administration*, and with a cheerful confidence commit our souls to so kind and so faithful a hand: far from *breaking*, he will strengthen the *bruised reed*; far from *quenching the smoking flax*, he will rather blow it up into a flame.

Mat. XI. 17

How well does it become the *disciples of Christ*, and especially how well does it become his *ministers*, to imitate what was so amiable in their *Lord*, and not to *despise the day of small things!* Let us not *strive nor cry*; but, laying aside all unnecessary contentions and angry debates, let us *receive one another* as *Christ hath received us* (*Rom.* xv. 7), and, avoiding all vain *ostentation*, let us silently and meekly attend, each of us, to the discharge of his proper office. So may we hope that the cause of religion will go on successfully around us, and that *righteousness* will in due time be *brought forth to* complete *victory* over all opposition, and, by its own genuine influences, be happily *established in the earth.*

Mat. XII. 20

The Gentiles trust in a Redeemer's name, and the *British Isles* are numbered among those that *wait for his law.* May our souls with humble submission bow themselves to receive it, and observe it with such faithful care and obedient regards, that our example, wherever it is seen, may promote the reception of it among those that as yet are strangers to it!

SECT.

[i] *And the Gentiles shall confide in his name.*] Isaiah's saying, chap. xlii. 4. *The isles shall wait for his law,* is illustrated and explained by this correspondent phrase, which Matthew uses.

SECT. LII.

Our Lord having spent the night in prayer on a mountain, in the morning chuses the twelve apostles; and then comes down to the multitude assembled in the plain, and performs a great number of miracles among them. Luke VI. 12—19. Mark III. 13—19.

LUKE VI. 12.

SECT. lii.

Luke VI. 12.

AND *it came to pass in those days*[a] of his teaching near the sea of Galilee, *that* Jesus, seeing the general notice which was taken of his appearance, and the inclination which multitudes had to be farther informed concerning him, determined to chuse a number of persons who should assist and succeed him in his ministerial work. And as the office to which he intended to assign them was of so great importance, even to the remotest ages, previous to the choice of them *he went forth to a* neighbouring *mountain to pray; and* his heart was so much enlarged on this momentous occasion that, notwithstanding all the labours of the preceding day, he *continued all night* at his devotions, *in an oratory* [*devoted to the service*] *of God*[b], where he had some opportunity of being sheltered by the trees which were planted round it.

13 *And when it was day*, early in the morning *he called his disciples to him, [even] those whom he pleased*, (compare John xv. 16,) *and they* cheerfully *came to him* upon his summons: *and out of them he chose* [*and*] *constituted twelve*[c], *whom he also*

LUKE VI. 12.

AND it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. [MARK III. 13.]

13 And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples, [whom he would; and they

[a] *In those days.*] There can be no doubt of the place of *this section*, since this *choice of the twelve apostles* is mentioned both by Mark and Luke just in this connection; and Matthew does not mention it at all till he comes to speak of the *mission of the twelve*, which is plainly a different thing, and happened some time after. Compare Luke xii. 1,2. with Mat. x. 1—5. sect. lxxiv.

[b] *In an oratory* [*devoted to the service*] *of God;* ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ.] This is so singular an expression that I cannot agree with *our translation*; but rather conclude with Drusius, Prideaux, Whitby, Hammond, and many other good *critics*, that we are to understand it of an *oratory*, or *proseucha*, or *prayer-house*, as Dr. Watts chuses to render it, (in his late ingenious discourse on *the Holiness of Places*, p. 111.) and as the word seems also to be used, Acts xvi. 13. (See *Hammond in loc.*) Descriptions of these places may be found in most writers of *Jewish Antiquities*, and in none that I know of better than in Calmet) at the word *Proseuche*, and in *Prideaux's Connection*, Vol. I. p. 387—389. It is well known they were open at the top, and planted round with trees; as well as often situate by the sides of *seas* or *rivers*, as was probably the case here. I did not chuse, with Dr. Whitby, to render it *in God's house of prayer*, that phrase having been so peculiarly appropriated to the *temple*. See Mat. xxi. 13.

[c] *Constituted twelve.*] So I chuse to render ἐποίησε rather than *ordained; ordination to the ministry*, carrying along with it an idea by no means suiting what passed *now*, which was so long before their entering on the office. The word is used elsewhere for *appointing to an office*, 1 Sam. xii. 6. *Gr.* and Heb. iii. 2.—It is probable *our Lord*

they came unto him:] and of them he chose [*and* ordained] twelve whom also he named apostles [that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach;] MARK III. 13. 14.

SECT. lii.

also named his *apostles*, or envoys; a name which well expressed the office for which they were designed: these he now fixed upon, *that* for some time *they should* continually *be with him*, not only to attend upon his public ministry, but to enjoy the benefit of his private conversation; that he might furnish them the better for the great work in which they were to be employed; *and that* at length, after suitable preparation, *he might* with more advantage, *send them abroad to preach* his gospel, and thereby make way for his own visits to some more distant parts where he had not yet been. *And to* enable them the more effectually to do it, he determined that they should then *have power to heal distempers, and to cast out demons* from those unhappy people who were possessed by them; well knowing such endowments would command a regard, notwithstanding the meanness of their appearance.

Luke VI. 13.

Mark III. 15.

MARK III. 15. And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.

16 And Simon he sirnamed Peter; [LUKE VI. 41.—]

And the twelve persons who were so signally honoured by him, and whose names (excepting that of Judas Iscariot) will be ever venerable in the Christian church, as being, next to Christ, the great foundations of it, (Eph. ii. 20. Rev. xxi. 14,) were these; *Simon*, whom (it has been observed before, John i. 42, p. 125) *he sirnamed Peter*[d], that is, a rock, on account of his remarkable steadiness and intrepidity of temper (see Isa. l. 7,) as well as the peculiar use to be made of him: *And James*, [*the son*] *of Zebedee*, the fisherman; *and John* the beloved disciple, who was *the brother of James: and he sirnamed them Boanerges, which signifies, Sons of thunder*[e]; thereby intimating with what victorious and resistless power they should bear down all opposition, and with Divine eloquence and mighty miracles confound the enemies of his gospel;

16

17

17 And James *the son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; (and he sirnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder; (LUKE VI. 14.—].

Lord chose *twelve apostles* in reference to the *twelve tribes of Israel*, (see Mat. xix. 28. Luke xxii. 30. Rev. xxi. 12, 14. and compare Exod. xxiv. 4. Deut. i. 23; and Josh. iv. 2, 3,) and therefore care was taken, on the death of Judas, to chuse another to make up the number. (Acts i. 21. 22, 26.) Which seems to have been a piece of respect paid to the Jews previous to the grand offer of the gospel to them; whereas when they had generally rejected it, *two* more, Paul and Barnabas, were added without any regard to the particular number of *twelve*.

d He *sirnamed Peter*.] *To sirname*, here plainly signifies to give an *additional name*; επεθηκε τω Σιμωνι ονομα Πετρον.

e *Boanerges, which signifies Sons of thunder*.] As it stands in this form it is plainly a corruption of BENEI REOISH. Considering the remarkable *gentleness* of John's temper and manner of writing, it is more reasonable to interpret *this title* as in the *paraphrase*, than to refer it to any thing peculiarly *awful* or *awakening* in their manner of address beyond what was to be found in the *other apostles*.

f Lebbeus,

SECT. lii.

Mark III. 17.

gospel: *And Andrew, and Philip,* of whose first acquaintance with Christ we were before informed, (John i. 40, 43;) *and Bartholomew; and Matthew,* or Levi, who had lately been called from the infamous employment of a publican, (Mat. ix. 9. p. 249.) *and Thomas,* who was also called Didymus, as having a twin brother; *and James* [*the son*] *of Alpheus,* called James the less, (Mark xv. 40) *and* Lebbeus, whose sirname was *Thaddeus,* and who was [*also called*] *Judas,* or Jude, [*the brother*] *of James*[f]; *and Simon the Canaanite, called* also *Zelotes*[g]; or the zealot, as having before professed a distinguished zeal for the law: *And,* worthy of being mentioned in the last place, or rather unworthy of being mentioned at all, otherwise than with the greatest abhorrence, was *Judas Iscariot,* or a man of Carioth, (Josh. xv. 25,) that infamous abandoned wretch, *who also was the traitor, that* afterwards was so ungrateful to his Lord, that he *even betrayed him*[h], into the hands of his bloody enemies: he had professed himself, with secular and worldly views, a disciple of Christ; and though our Lord well knew him, yet, as his character was free from any visible ground of suspicion, in order to accomplish what was delivered in the sacred oracles, he was pleased to invest him with this holy office, and to place him among his apostles: (compare John xiii. 18.) *And*

18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew and Thomas, and James *the son* of Alpheus, and Thaddeus, [*or* Judas *the brother* of James,] and Simon the Canaanite, [called Zelotes;] — [LUKE VI. 14, 15, 16.—]

19 And Judas Iscariot, [which also was the traitor,] which also betrayed him.— [LUKE VI. 16.—]

[f] Lebbeus, whose sirname was *Thaddeus,* and who was *also called Judas,* or Jude, *the brother of James.*] That this person had *all these names* appears from comparing the *catalogues* given us in the places before us, and in Mat. x. 2—4. and Acts i. 13. *Lebbeus* being derived from LOB, which signifies the *heart,* and *Thaddeus* probably from THAD, a *Syro-chaldaic* word, which, as some critics tell us, signifies *the breast,* seem equivalent names, and may signify *the hearty Judas;* perhaps to distinguish him from that *other Judas* whose faithless *breast* and foul *heart* had brought a kind of infamy on the name; so that neither Matthew nor Mark use it when speaking of this apostle; and John takes particular care to prevent the confusion which might arise from the ambiguity of it. John xiv. 22.

[g] *Simon the Canaanite, called* also *Zelotes.*] It is matter of some doubt with me whether he was called *the Canaanite,* as being a native of *Cana in Galilee,* as some have thought; or whether it be derived, as Dr. Hammond thinks, from the *Hebrew* KANAD and signifies the same with *Zelotes.* But though we have many instances of extraordinary *zeal* in Phinehas, Elijah, the Maccabees, &c. and read in ancient *Jewish writers* of the *Judgment of zeal* by which Stephen was murdered, Paul assaulted, &c. yet I cannot find any *sect* of men distinguished by that name till mentioned by *Josephus* (*Bell. Jud.* lib. iv. cap. 3. (al. 5.) § 9,) a little before the destruction of Jerusalem. If Simon had the additional name of *Zelotes* given him on account of his personal *zeal for the law* (which is possible,) he might probably be a Pharisee: but Mr. Fleming's conjecture that he was the *father of Judas Iscariot,* who is called *the son of Simon* (John xii. 4.) seems very precarious, considering how common the name of Simon was. See *Fleming's Christology,* Vol. II. p. 167.

[h] *That even betrayed him.*] It is plain that καὶ has great force here, if it be rendered *even*; or else it seems a mere *expletive.*

[i] *Unclean*

SECT. lii.

Luke VI. 17. And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

And after he had acquainted these twelve persons with his design, and had given them such private instructions as he judged convenient to render their attendance upon him subservient to the execution of their important office, *he came down* from the mountain *with them, and stood in the* neighbouring *plain: and* as the morning was now pretty far advanced, *the crowd of his disciples* [*gathered round him:*] *and* besides those that had followed him for some time, and were now persuaded of his Divine mission, there was also still waiting upon him (as we observed above, Mark iii. 7, 8, p. 276) *a great multitude of people from all* parts of *Judea, and* particularly from *Jerusalem, and* even *from the shore of Tyre and Sidon*, which lay on the Mediterranean sea; *who came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases: And they* also *who were infested with unclean* and wicked *spirits*[i], made their application to him; *and they were cured* of the terrible disorders which those malignant beings occasioned. *And the whole multitude* of these unhappy people *endeavoured* at least *to touch him; for* so extraordinary were the miracles of this day, that in some instances, where our Lord did not so much as take any apparent notice of the case, yet *there went* a Divine, though secret *virtue out of him, and* wrought so powerfully on those that touched him, that it *healed them all*, how desperate soever their distempers were.

Luke VI. 17

18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed. 18

19 And the whole multitude sought to touch him; for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all. 19

IMPROVEMENT.

WHEN we consider how much the church in all ages has been indebted to the labours of *the apostles*, and how much we ourselves owe to them, we shall see great reason of thankfulness to our wise and gracious Master, who was pleased to assign this work to his servants, and so eminently to qualify them for it. It is observable, that *before he sent them forth*, he chose them to *be with him* in a more Luke vi. 13.

i *Unclean spirits.*] It seems to me an excessive refinement in the learned *editors* of the Prussian Testament to distinguish (as they do in their *note* on Mat. x. 1.) *unclean spirits* from other *evil spirits* which might possess men; supposing the word only to signify such kind of *spirits* as drove men to *dwell among the tombs*, by which they became *ceremonially unclean*. How little it can be supported from Luke iv. 33, see the *note* there, p. 191. It is evident *unclean* and *evil spirits* are generally used as nearly *synonymous terms*, referring to the *moral impurity* and *malignity* of their natures. Compare Mat. xii. 43; Luke xi. 24; and Rev. xvi. 13, 14.

a *Said*

SECT. liii.

more constant attendance on his person and ministry. May all who succeed them as *preachers of the gospel*, be such as have intimately *known Christ* themselves, and have been accustomed to spiritual converse *with him;* that they may with the greater ability, zeal and efficacy, recommend him to others!

Mark iii. 14.

Luke vi. 12.

We may assure ourselves that these his future *ministers* had no inconsiderable share in those *petitions* in which, with unabating fervour and intenseness of devotion, *our Redeemer* spent this memorable *night*. And if we have any regard for the support of religion in the rising age, let us likewise be earnestly *praying* both for them that are already *in the ministry*, and for such as are *preparing for it*. This surely ought to be the frequent care, not only of those who have the *tremendous charge of educating such* as are ere long to be intrusted with the honour of the gospel and the care of souls, but of those who are now struggling with the glorious labours and trials of that important office, and even of all those *private christians*, who cordially love the interest of their Master, and wish the salvation of their fellow-creatures.

Let us unite our cries to him who has engaged to be *always with his church even to the end of the world*, and say, "Light up, *O Lord*, a brighter and a stronger flame in the lamps of thy sanctuary! Polish these arrows of thy quiver, that they may pierce deep into the consciences of men! Let thy *priests be clothed with salvation*, that thy *saints* may *shout aloud for joy!* And pour forth upon them so plenteous an *unction* of thine *Holy Spirit*, that the odours of thy grace may by their means be diffused around throughout all thy tabernacles; like that of the fragrant oil, which was poured on *the head of Aaron*, in such rich abundance, that it not only *ran down on his beard*, but reached even *to the skirts of his garments!* Amen, and Amen."

SECT. LIII.

Christ, in the audience of his new-chosen disciples, and of the multitude, repeats in the plain many remarkable passages of his sermon before delivered on the mount. Luke VI. 20—36.

LUKE VI. 20.

SECT. liii.

AND [*Jesus*] *lifting up his eyes on his disciples*, who surrounded him, and more especially directing them to his apostles whom he had lately chosen, *said* unto them[a], *Happy are you* who

Luke vi. 20.

LUKE VI. 20.

AND he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed

are

[a] *Said* unto them.] Hardly any thing that I have observed in the common *harmonies* surprises me more, than that so many of them make *this discourse* to be the very *sermon*

SECT. liii.

Luke VI. 20.

Blessed *be* ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God.

are enriched with Divine knowledge and grace, though your circumstances in this world are *poor* and mean; *for the kingdom of God*, in all its transcendent and eternal glories, *is yours*, and you are hastening on to the full possession of it.

21 Blessed *are* ye that hunger now; for ye shall be filled. Blessed *are* ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh.

21 *Happy are you who are now hungry* and destitute of all the comfortable accommodations of life, if you feel that nobler appetite by which the religious soul longs after improvements in holiness[b]; *for you shall* ere long *be filled* with the most substantial and valuable blessings. *Happy are you who now mourn* under a sense of sin, or under that wholesome discipline of affliction by which God reduces his wandering children, and trains them up to superior virtue; *for* all your sorrow shall pass away like a dream, and *you shall* ere long *laugh* and rejoice in a complete deliverance from it. (See Mat. v. 4.)

22 Blessed *are* ye when men shall hate you and when they shall separate you *from their company*, and shall reproach *you*, and cast out your name as evil, for the son of man's sake:

22 *Happy are you when men shall hate you, and* persecute you; *when they shall separate you* [*from their assemblies*[c],] as unworthy of communion with them; *and shall reproach you* in their private conversation, *and cast out your names as* infamously *evil* in their public acts of civil or ecclesiastical judgment, *on account of* your professed adherence to *the Son of man* (see John ix. 22—34), for that glorious and sacred Person is able abundantly to repay all you can suffer for him:

23 Rejoice ye in that day,

And therefore, far from being dismayed and overwhelmed

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son on the mount recorded at large by Matthew in his *fifth*, *sixth*, and *seventh chapters*. *That* was delivered by *Christ*, *sitting on a mountain* (Mat. v. 1); *this* (as it seems from ver. 18) *standing in a plain;* and, which weighs yet much more with me, there is such a *difference* in the expression, when the *parallel passages* come to be compared, that it seems evident the *evangelists* have not related it exactly, if they meant to give us *the same*. On the other hand, there appears not the least difficulty in supposing that *Christ* might here *repeat* a part of what he had delivered some months before to another auditory, and probably at some greater distance than just in the same neighbourhood. (See *note* [b] on Luke v. 12, p. 241, and *note* [b] on Mat. v. 1, p. 199.) For it is plain from other instances, that this is nothing more than what he often had occasion to do. (Compare Mat. ix. 32—34 with Mat. xii. 22—24, and xvi. 21 with xvii. 22, 23, and xx 17—19.) And indeed, since it is certain from Mat. vii. 28, 29, that what *that evangelist* has recorded as the *sermon on the mount* was all delivered *at once*; they who suppose *this* the *very same*, must grant that great part of it was *repeated* at different times, and on different occasions. (See *note* [c] on Mat. vii. 28, p. 240.) Dr. Whitby and Mr. Blair agree with me in this account of the matter, chiefly on the reasons I have here assigned.

[b] *Who are now hungry*—If you feel that nobler appetite, &c.] Compare *note* [g] on Mat. v. 6. p. 201. And let it be observed in general, that the sense of the more *dubious expressions* in this discourse may be much illustrated by comparing *parallel passages* in the *sermon on the mount*; to which I have accordingly referred, not judging it necessary to repeat in the *notes* here what I had said there.

[c] *Separate you from their assemblies.*] Grotius's excellent *note* on this clause well deserves a most attentive reading; containing a most learned *dissertation* on the various kinds of *excommunication* among the Jews.

SECT. liii.

Luke VI. 23.

whelmed with trouble and distress at such abuses and assaults, *be glad in that day, and* with holy alacrity even *leap for joy; for, behold, your reward in heaven is great* in proportion to your sufferings on earth: *For thus their fathers did to the prophets* of old, who now are in seats of distinguished glory. (See Mat. v. 11, 12.)

day, and leap fo for behold, your r *is* great in heave in the like manr their fathers un prophets.

24 *But* there is, generally speaking[d], cause to denounce a *woe to you who are rich; for* so ensnaring are the circumstances in which you are placed, that it is much to be feared *you have* already *received* all *your consolation* (compare Luke xvi. 25.) and will be so taken up with the transient pleasures of time as to forget and forfeit everlasting blessedness. There is generally reason to say, *Woe unto you who are* now *filled* to the full, and pampered with all the most luxurious dainties! *for you shall* ere long *suffer hunger*, and fall into a state of indigence and misery, aggravated by all the plenty which you have enjoyed and abused. *Woe unto you who* spend your lives in mirth and gaiety, and are so vain as *now* to *laugh* off every solemn and awful thought! *for you* have reason to expect a portion in those doleful regions where, without intermission and without end, you *shall mourn and lament.* And again, I may generally say, in so corrupt an age as this, *Woe unto you when all men speak well of you! for* such universal applause is seldom to be gained without sinful compliances; and *thus did their fathers to the false prophets* of old, who soothed them in their idolatries and other crimes with smooth addresses and vain assurances of security and happiness.

24 But woe un that are rich! have received consolation.

25 Woe unt that are full! shall hunger. unto you that now! for ye mourn and wee

26 Woe unt when all mer speak well of yc so did their fat the false prophe

27 You, my disciples, if you would approve your fidelity to God and to me, must act in a very different manner, by which you will certainly expose yourselves to hatred and persecution: *But I say unto you,* and to all *that hear* me this day, Far from entertaining sentiments of malice and purposes of revenge, *love* even *your enemies,* and *do good to them that hate you: Bless them that* in the malignity of their hearts revile and *curse you; and* cordially and fervently *pray for them that* most *spitefully* harrass and *abuse you.* (See Mat. v. 44.)

27 But I sa you which hea your enemies; to them whic you;

28 Bless the curse you; an for them whi spitefully use y

And,

d Generally speaking.] Compare Mat. xix. 23, 24. It is most evident that such expressions as these in scripture are to be taken with some *limitations*, ot they would be contrary to fact i instances.

nd unto him eth thee on the ek, offer also ier; and him eth away thy forbid not *to* coat also.

And, as ever you would attain to such exalted degrees of fortitude and goodness, accustom yourselves patiently to bear the common injuries of life, which a false sense of honour and interest renders so much more intolerable than they really are. *If*, for instance, *a man smite thee on the* [*one*] *cheek*, rather than return the blow, *offer also the other to him; and if he take away thy mantle, do not* by violence attempt to *hinder him* [*from taking*] *also thy vest.* (See the notes on Mat. v. 39, p. 214.)

ive to every at asketh of id of him that way thy goods not again.

I would also charge it upon you to labour after a diffusive liberality, as well as exemplary meekness: be ready then to *give to every one that asketh thee* for an alms, where thou hast reason to believe it is charity to do it; *and from him that taketh away thy possessions* in an injurious manner, *do not* immediately *demand them back* in the forms of law, but rather endeavour by gentler methods to reduce the offender to reason.

nd as ye would n should do to ye also to ewise.

And do not by any means imagine, that the injuries you receive from others will cancel the bonds of common humanity to them; but *as you would* reasonably desire *that men should do to you, do you also in like manner to them*, and by putting yourselves, as it were, in their places, endeavour to form your minds to an impartial judgment. (See note on Mat. vii. 12, p. 234.)

r if ye love hich love you, ank have ye? iers also love it love them.

And indeed *if you* only *love them that love you what* great *thanks are due to you* upon that account? *For* there are some sentiments of gratitude common *even* to the worst of men, which incline the most scandalous *sinners* to *love those that love them*, and to profess an affectionate regard for those by whom they have been treated with respect and kindness.

nd if ye do them which do you, what ave ye? for also do even e.

And if you do good offices only *to them that are your benefactors, what* mighty *thanks are due to you* for that? *For even* the most infamous *sinners*, either from instinct, or from mere self-love, may often be observed to *do the same.* (Compare Mat. v. 46, 47, p. 216.)

nd if ye lend of whom ye receive, what have ye? for also lend to sinreceive as much

And if you lend only *to them from whom you hope to receive*, and that, perhaps, with considerable advantage to yourselves, what favour do you shew in that, or *what* extraordinary *thanks are due to you* on that account? *For even* the greatest *sinners lend to* other *sinners* like themselves, *that*, when there is occasion, *they may receive the like* assistance in return from them.

But

SECT. liii.

Luke VI. 35. *But* I exhort you to *love your enemies, and* to *do good, and lend* in cases of great necessity, even *when you can hope for nothing again*[e]: *and* so *your reward* in heaven *will be great, and you will* appear to *be the sons of the most High* God; *for* in the course of his daily providence *he is kind to the ungrateful and evil*, causing the undeserved benefits of the sun and rain to descend upon them, and filling their insensible hearts with food and gladness. (Compare Mat. v. 44, 45,

36 and Acts xiv. 17.) *Be ye therefore merciful, as* he *also* whom you call *your* heavenly *Father is merciful*; and unto whom indeed you cannot stand related as his children, if you have no concern to imitate and to obey him. (Compare Mat. v. 48, p. 216.

35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful, and *to* the evil.

36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

IMPROVEMENT.

Luke vi. 20. How necessary is it, that our forgetful hearts should have *line upon line, and precept upon precept?* If *Christ* did not think it improper to *repeat this discourse*, surely it will not be needless for us to *renew our attention* to it. Oh that every word of it were *engraven on our hearts as with the point of a diamond*, that we might learn, in spite of all the foolish wisdom of this world, to form ourselves on these maxims, as the surest guide to present and to eternal felicity!

21--26 *Our Lord* again pronounces the *poor* and the *hungry*, the *mournful* and the *persecuted, happy*; and represents those as *miserable* who are *rich* and *full, joyous* and *applauded*; not that this is universally the case; but because prosperous circumstances are so frequently a sweet poison, and affliction a healing though bitter medicine. Let the thought reconcile us to *adversity*, and awaken our caution when the *world smiles* upon us; when a *plentiful table* is spread before us, and our *cup runneth over*; when our *spirits* are *gay* and sprightly; or when we hear, what to corrupted nature is too harmonious *music*, that of *our own praise* from men. Oh that we may secure, what is of infinitely greater importance, the *praise of our heavenly Master*, by a constant obedientiel regard to these his precepts!

34 May we be happy proficients in the art of *bearing* and *forgiving injuries!* May we be *ready to every good word and work!* maintaining an *eye* quick to observe, a *heart* tender to feel, a *hand* open

[e] *When you can hope for nothing again.*] I cannot think (as *De Dieu* and some others have done agreeably to the *Syriac* and *Arabic versions*) that μηδεν απελπιζοντες should be rendered [illegible] neither the *phrase itself*, nor the *opposition* in which it stands to ver. 34, will admit such an interpretation. See Dr. Whitby's note here.

a If

open to relieve the *calamities* and *necessities* of *friends*, of *strangers* and of *enemies*, *giving* to some; and where, perhaps, there may be little prospect of a return, *lending* to others; which, if it engage them to greater industry, is as real a benefit as if the *loan* were a *gift*. SECT. liii. Luke VI. 34.

On the whole, let us not presume to call God *our Father*, if we do not labour to *resemble him*; nor dare to challenge the peculiar honour and privileges of *Christ's disciples*, if we do not distinguish ourselves from others by the *charity* of our *tempers* and the *usefulness* of our *lives*, as well as by the *articles* of our *faith* and the *forms* of our *worship*. 35, 36

SECT. LIV.

Our Lord goes on to repeat many remarkable passages of his sermon on the mount, with some proper additions relating to the same subjects. Luke VI. 37, *to the end.*

LUKE VI. 37.

JUDGE not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.

LUKE VI. 37.

JUDGE not others with rigour and severity, *and you* may hope that you *shall not* yourselves *be judged* with that severity which you must otherwise expect from God, and which the most innocent and virtuous characters would not be able to bear: *Condemn not* others with a rash censoriousness, *and you shall not be condemned: Forgive* others their offences; *and* if you do it from a truly religious principle[a], *you shall* also *be forgiven* by God those offences against him, which are infinitely greater than any you can possibly receive from your fellow-creatures. (See Mat. vii. 1. p. 231.) SECT. liv. Luke VI. 37.

38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom: for with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.

Give liberally to those that need your assistance, *and it shall be given* back *to you* in a rich abundance: for it will gain you so much love and respect, that God will so influence men's hearts in your favour, that *men shall*, as it were, *pour into your lap*[b] *good measure*, blessings *pressed down, and shaken together, and* even *running over; for* it may be taken as a general rule, that *by the same measure that ye measure with* to others, *it will* in return *be measured back to you.* (See Mat. vii. 2, p. 231.) 38

a **If you do it from a truly religious principle.**] This must be supposed, to make it consistent with those passages in which *love to God*, and *faith in Christ*, as well as other branches of the *Christian temper*, are insisted upon as so absolutely necessary, that without them the greatest *lenity* and *indulgence* to our fellow-creatures cannot give us a claim to the promises of pardon and salvation.

b *Into your lap.*] Here is an evident reference to the *mantles* which the Jews wore, into which a considerable quantity of corn might be received. Compare Ruth iii. 15. 2 Kings iv. 39. Neh. v. 13. Prov. xvi. 33.

SECT. liv.

He spake also, at the same time, *a parable to them* (which he afterwards repeated, Mat. xv. 14.) to caution them against submitting with an implicit faith to the conduct of ignorant or vicious men, who might set up for religious teachers; and said, *Can the blind* undertake to *guide the blind? Will they not both*, in such a case, be likely to *fall into a pit*, or ditch, which may happen to lie in their way? And, in like manner, you have nothing to expect from following such men, but to perish with them. There is little reason to hope that, under their instruction, you should be wiser and better than they: for it is, you know, a common proverb, That *the scholar is not above his teacher; but* all that can reasonably be expected is, that *every* one who is a *finished* [*scholar*] should come up to him that teaches him; and it is this that he *will* principally aim at, to *be as his master:* It is of great importance therefore that you should well consider whom you take to be your teachers; for it is necessary your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, if you expect a share in the kingdom of heaven. (See Mat. v. 20, and x. 24, 25.)

Luke vi. 39. 39 And he spake a parable unto them: Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40 The disciple is not above his master; but every one that is perfect, shall be as his master.

Yet, on the other hand, I would not have you to be forward in blaming them, or any other, while you neglect a due regulation of your own temper *and* conduct: for *why dost thou look at the* little *mote which is in thy brother's eye, and observest not the* much greater disorder which is like a *beam in thine own eye? Or how canst thou* with any decency, or to any purpose, *say to thy brother, Brother, hold still,* [*and*] *I will take out the mote which is in thine eye, while* thou art at the same time so blind and partial, that *thou seest not the beam which is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite*, who falsely pretendest that zeal for the honour of religion, which, while thou art thus careless of thyself, thou canst not really have, *first cast out the beam from thine own eye, and then thou wilt discern* [*how*] *to take out the mote that is in thy brother's eye;* which is an office that requires greater wisdom and conduct than in thy present circumstances thou canst be supposed to have. (See the notes on Mat. vii. 3, 4, p. 232.)

41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

Till thou shalt thus reform thyself, there is not much to be expected from thine endeavours to reform others: *for* as *there is no good tree which*

43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit: neither doth a

a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

44 For every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good: an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say.

47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like.

48 He is like a man, which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a

which produces bad fruit; so *neither* is there *any* SECT. liv.
bad tree which produces good fruit: *For* all the
world is agreed that *every tree is* to be *known* Luke VI. 44.
by its proper fruit: *men, for instance*[c], *do not* 44
gather figs of thorns, nor do they gather a cluster of grapes from a bramble. (Compare Mat. vii. 16, p. 235.)

And indeed, where men converse with any de- 45
gree of intimacy, they may be known and judged of by their words as well as by their actions. *A good man*, maintaining an habitual sense of the Divine Presence, and feeling in his own soul a spring of habitual and diffusive benevolence to his fellow-creatures naturally *produces that which is good, out of the good treasure of* grace and love which is laid up in *his heart*: *and* on the other hand, *a bad man out of the bad treasure of* evil principles and corrupt affections which is laid up in *his heart, produces that which is bad*, which often breaks out before he is aware, and discovers his character, even contrary to his intention; *for his mouth* naturally *speaks from the overflowing of the heart*, and no man has so much artifice as to command it entirely so that it shall never discover itself in some unguarded moment. (Compare Mat xii. 34, 35, sect. lxii.)

Yet remember, it is not merely by men's 46
words that their character will finally be judged, *and* their estate fixed; especially, that it will not be determined by a few pious and devotional forms of speech, which in themselves are of very little worth: for *why do ye call me, Lord, Lord*, or what imaginable purpose does that profession serve, if in your practice you are regardless of my will, *and do not the things which I say* and command to all that call themselves my disciples? (Compare Mat. vii. 21.)

This is a vanity of which I have formerly 47
warned you: and to repeat the warning, *I will shew you*, on the other hand, *to whom that man is like, who comes to me, and hears my words, and practises* agreeably to *them*: and, on the other hand, to whom it is that he may be resembled, who hears my words, and doeth them not. As 48
to the former, *he is like a* prudent *man, that built an house* on the river-side; *and*, considering the

[c] *Men, for instance.*] This is one of those many places where the word γαρ *(for)* has not its usual signification, of introducing the *reason* of something before asserted, but merely intimates an *illustration* of it.

SECT. liv. Luke VI. 48. the importance of the undertaking and the difficulty of the situation, *dug deep* through the sand and marl and gravel, till he came to the solid stone, *and placed the foundation* of his house *upon a rock: and* afterwards he was abundantly repaid for all his labour and expence; for *when the inundation came, the current* of the river with an impetuous torrent *violently broke upon that house, and* yet *was not able to shake it, because it was founded upon a rock:* thus securely will the practical hearer stand the shock of temptations, and the trial of death and of the judgment-day.

a rock: and, when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock.

49 *But,* on the other hand, *he that hears* my words, *and does not practise* them, *is like a* foolish *man, that built an house on the* bare surface of the *ground, without* any care to secure *a foundation; against which the* impetuous *stream did violently break* with the same fury, *and,* being unable to withstand the shock, *it presently fell down; and the ruin of that house was* irreparably *great,* and its inhabitants were all crushed under it. (Compare Mat. vii. 24—27, sect. xliii.)

49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man, that without a foundation built an house upon the earth, against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 37 LET a frequent reflection on our own faults teach us *candour;* and let a sense of our continued dependence on Divine liberality make us *liberal* towards those that need our assistance; lest we lose the comfort so justly forfeited, and *abused mercies* be another day 38 repaid with *measures of wrath, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.*

We are another day to give an account of ourselves before God: let us then judge for ourselves in matters of religion; and be very 39 careful that we do not stupidly follow *blind guides,* till we *fall with them* into destruction. "*Lead us,* O Lord, *in the way everlasting!* Form us to a more perfect *resemblance* of our great 15 *Master!* Make us *severe to ourselves,* and, so far as it is real 41, 44 charity, *indulgent to others!* Sanctify *our hearts* by thy grace, that they may be as *trees bringing forth good fruit,* or as *foun-* 45 *tains* pouring out wholesome streams! *There* may a *good treasure* be laid up, from whence *good things* may be abundantly produced! *There* may those holy and benevolent *affections* continually spring up, which may flow forth with unaffected freedom, to refresh the souls and animate the graces of all that are around us!"

46, 49 May these beautiful, striking, repeated *admonitions,* which *our Saviour* gives us of the vanity of every *profession* which does not influence the *practice,* be attended to with reverence and fear!

We

We are *building for eternity;* may we never grudge the time and labour of a most serious inquiry into the great fundamental principles of religion? May we discover *the sure foundation*, and raise upon it a noble superstructure, which shall stand fair and glorious, when *hypocrites* are swept away into everlasting ruin, *in that awful day* in which *heaven and earth shall flee away from the face of him that sits upon the throne!* (*Rev.* xx. 11.) SECT. LIV.

SECT. LV.

Christ, after preaching in the plain, goes to Capernaum, and miraculously cures, even at a distance, the centurion's servant that was sick of a palsy. Luke VII. 1—10. Mat. VIII. 5—13.

LUKE VII. 1.

NOW when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

LUKE VII. 1.

IN the two former sections we have heard the excellent discourse that Jesus made; and *now, when he had finished all* these *his sayings*, which, though immediately addressed to his disciples, he had delivered *in the hearing of the people* who stood round him in the plain, having dismissed the assembly, *he* quickly after *entered into Capernaum* again. SECT. LV. Luke VII. 1.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

And at that time *the servant of a certain* Roman officer in that city (called a *centurion*, from his having the command of a company of soldiers consisting of a hundred men), *who was* dear to his master, and *greatly esteemed by him, was* exceeding *ill, and in* great *danger of death.* 2

3 And when he heard of Jesus, [when Jesus was entered into Capernaum,] he [came unto him; *having first*] sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant:—[MAT. VIII. 5.]

And hearing of Jesus, when he entered into Capernaum, where the nobleman's son was miraculously cured by him at a distance (John iv. 46, sect. xxxi), such was the faith of the centurion in his power to help him, that *he came to him*[a] with a very humble and respectful application; which indeed he did not directly presume to make in his own person, [*but first*] *sent unto him the elders of the Jews*, or some of the most considerable of them that dwelt in this city, in whom his generosity had procured a considerable interest; humbly *entreating him* by them, *that he would* condescend to *come and* set him free from the distress that he was in, not doubting his ability to 3

[a] ***He came to him.***] It is very plain, from Luke's larger and more circumstantial representation of the case, that *the centurion* did not come at first in his own person (see Luke vii. 6, 7), but he might properly be said to do that which he directed *the elders* to do in his name: and nothing is more frequent, even to this day, in our *courts of law*, than to say that a person *comes into the court* and asks a thing which he asks perhaps only *at third hand*, by the *counsel* whom his *solicitor* has employed in his cause.

SECT. lv.

to *heal his servant; And saying, Lord, my* faithful and beloved *servant lies* at home *in* [*my*] *house* in a very deplorable condition, being *seized with the palsy;* which, though it has quite disabled him from motion, yet has left him sensible of pain, with which he is so *dreadfully tormented* that he can take no rest.

Mat. VIII. 6. Mat. VIII. 6. And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy grievously tormented.

Luke VII. 4 *And* such was the regard the elders of the Jews had for him, that, *being come to Jesus, they entreated him with great importunity, saying, He* in whose name we now address thee *is* one who 5 is *worthy of this favour*[b]. *For* though he be a Gentile, and a stranger among us, yet *he* is a worshipper of the true God, and greatly *loves our nation;* so that he takes many opportunities of doing good in the neighbourhood (compare Acts x. 2), *and* has carried his generosity so far that *he hath built us a synagogue* for public worship at his own expence.

Luke VII. 4. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

Mat. VIII. 7 *And Jesus,* willing to pay some distinguishing respect to a person of so worthy a character, *saith unto him,* or sent him word by those who had petitioned for him, *I will* immediately *come* down to the centurion's house, to see the servant he is so concerned about, *and heal him.*

Mat. VIII. 7. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

Luke VII. 6 *And* accordingly, *Jesus went with them; and now,* as he was going thither, *when he was not a great way from the house, the centurion sent* some other *friends to him;* and at last came himself in person; *and answered* the kind message which Jesus had sent him, *saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself* to come any farther; *for I am not worthy that thou,* who art so holy and honourable a person, *shouldest enter under my roof:* 7 *Wherefore* indeed *neither did I think myself,* who am an alien from this holy nation, *worthy to come* immediately *to thee;* but first chose to make use of the elders of the place, and of these my other friends: and all that I would now presume to ask, is, That thou wouldest *but* please *only* to *speak the word, and* I know that *my servant shall* immediately *be healed.* 8 *For even I* [*who*] *am* only a centurion, *a man ranged under the authority* of my commanding officer[c], yet as I *have soldiers*

Luke VII. 6. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, [and answered,] saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: [Mat. VIII. 8.—]

7 Wherefore, neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee; but say in a word, [speak the word only,] and my servant shall be healed. [Mat. VIII. 8.]

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers; and I say unto

[b] *Worthy of this favour.*] By far the greater number of *copies* read it as it stands in *our version, Worthy for whom he should do this:* yet the connection seems to intimate that the *original reading* was ωαριξις, *Thou shouldest do this.* I have chosen to render it in such a manner as will suit either.

[c] *Ranged under the authority* of my commanding officer.] It is well known that the *Roman centurions* were subject to the command of their *respective tribunes;* as our *captains* are to that of their *colonels.*

[d] *Slave.*]

unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. [MAT. VIII. 9.]

soldiers under myself, order and govern them by the intimations of my will, whether present or absent; *and I say to one, Go* to such a place, *and he goeth; and to another, Come* hither, *and he cometh; and to my slave*[d], *Do this, and he* immediately *doeth it;* now I firmly believe thou hast yet a more absolute power over the strongest and most desperate diseases, and canst at pleasure command them off from the afflicted, when thou art either near, or at a distance; and I shall thankfully accept this cure in the manner that may be least inconvenient to thyself. SECT. IV. Luke VIII. 8.

9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, [Verily,] I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel, [MAT. VIII. 10.]

And Jesus hearing these things, admired him on account of his great humility, and the strength of his faith; *and, turning about, he said to the multitude that followed him, Verily, I declare unto you, That* through all my journies and converse, *I have not found, even in* all *Israel, such* an illustrious degree of *faith* as now appears in this stranger, who only sojourns among you. *But I say unto you* with great solemnity, *That many shall* at last *come*, not only from the neighbouring provinces of the Roman empire, but even *from* the remotest Gentile nations, which lie to *the east and west*[e] of its utmost boundaries, *and shall sit down with* your pious ancestors, *Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob*, to share with them *in* the delightful entertainments and final blessedness of *the kingdom of heaven*[f]. *But* many of *the children of the kingdom*, who were born within the sacred enclosure, and appeared to stand fairest for all the mercies of the covenant, and indeed the bulk of the Jewish nation, *shall be* rejected with abhorrence for their unbelief, and be *cast out into that* gloomy *darkness which is without*[g]; *there* 9 Mat. VIII. 11 12

MAT. VIII. 11. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[d] *Slave.*] As the word δουλος generally signifies *a slave* rather than a *hired servant*, I chose to render it thus here, as thinking it most expressive of the *authority* to which the speech refers.

[e] *From the east and west.*] Perhaps this may be only a *proverbial phrase* to signify coming from the most distant parts. But I cannot forbear observing here that the gospel spread much more to *the east* and *west* of Judea than to the *north* and *south* of it: though it seems rather to be spoken as a general expression, as will appear by comparing it with Luke xiii. 29. and Isa. xliii. 5, 6.

[f] Final blessedness of *the kingdom of heaven.*] So the *phrase* must here be explained; for it cannot be said, with any propriety, either that the holy *patriarchs*, share with *Christians* in the present privileges of the *gospel-state*, or that the *Jews weep and wail* on account of their being *excluded* from them.

[g] Gloomy *darkness which is without*; το σκοτος το εξωτερον.] It has justly been observed by many *commentators* that *this phrase*, which is often used after *the kingdom of heaven* has been compared to *a banquet*, contains a beautiful allusion to the *lustre* of those *illuminated rooms* in which such feasts were generally celebrated, as opposed to that *darkness* which surrounded those who by night were turned out: but it also sometimes goes yet farther, when the

SECT. lv.

there shall be perpetual *weeping* for sorrow, *and gnashing of the teeth* with envy, at such an enraging sight.

Mat. VIII. 13. *And*, having uttered these words for the admonition of the Jews, and for the encouragement of this pious stranger and his friends, *Jesus said to the centurion*, who now stood by, *Go thy way* home[h] in peace; *and be it unto thee*, and to thy servant, *according to thy faith. And in that very hour* that he spake these words, just at that instant, *was his servant healed.*

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way: and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.

Luke VII. 10. *And they who had been sent* from the centurion as his messengers to Christ, *returning* with him *to the house*, were eye-witnesses of the cure, and *found the servant that had been sick restored to perfect health* and vigour[i]. This might occasion the conversion of the family; and was a miracle that greatly raised the fame of Jesus, and made the multitude more eager in their pressing after him.

LUKE VII. 10. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

IMPROVEMENT.

Luke vii. 2, 3. IT is pleasant to think of this good *centurion*, who amidst all the temptations of a military life, retained the principles, not only of liberality and humanity, but of piety too; and, probably amidst the raillery of his irreligious and idolatrous brethren, had the courage to frequent, and even to *build a synagogue*. Surely his *devotion* did not enervate, but rather invigorate and establish his *valour*; nor did he find himself less dutifully regarded by the *soldiers* under his command for his parental tenderness to his afflicted *servant*, which brought him thus humbly to *petition Christ* in his favour. Such may *our officers* be! and we may hope that *the hosts of heaven* will with pleasure *cover their heads in the day of battle*, and obedient *troops* be formed, by their example and their care, to the discipline of *virtue* as well as of *war*.

Mat. viii. 6, 9.

Luke vii. 4, 5. We see the force of real *goodness* to conquer the most inveterate *prejudices*: *the elders of the Jews at Capernaum* turn petitioners for a *Gentile*, for a *Roman centurion*: so may we disarm the virulency of a *party spirit*, and conciliate the *friendship* of those who otherwise might have their *eyes upon us for evil!*

In

persons excluded are supposed to be *thrown into a dark dungeon.* Compare Mat. xxii. 13. xxv. 30. and Jude, ver. 1.

[h] *Go thy way* home.] This most evidently proves that the *centurion* was at length *come out of his house*, probably on hearing that *Jesus* was nearer to it than he apprehended when he sent the second message by his *friends*.

[i] *Restored to perfect health* and vigour.] This the word ὑγιαίνοντα seems to import; nor did it suit the honour and goodness of Christ to leave the *cure incomplete*. Compare Mat. viii. 15.

In plentiful circumstances and an honourable station, how great is the *humility* of this *worthy man!* How low are the thoughts that he has of himself! And with what veneration and respect does he address himself to *Christ!* And, had *this centurion* been even a *tribune* or a *general*, this humble address would well have become him when he was thus applying unto *Christ.* And how well does it become us, when entreating the blessed *Jesus* to exert his healing power on our hearts, to bow with deep humility before him, and to say, "*Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof*, or *worthy the honour of appearing in thy presence!*" *He that* thus *humbleth himself, shall be exalted*, (Luke xviii. 14.) nor do we ever stand fairer for the *praise of Christ* than when we see ourselves *undeserving* even of *his notice.* SECT. lv. Mat. VIII. 8. Luke vii. 6, 7.

Behold an instance of *faith* in a *stranger to the commonwealth of Israel*, by which *their unbelief* was *condemned!* Oh that the *virtues of heathens* may not another day *rise up* to *our condemnation*, notwithstanding an higher profession and much nobler advantages! We cannot but rejoice to hear that *many shall come from the east and the west, to sit down with the pious patriarchs in the kingdom of heaven:* but how deplorable is the case of those *children of the kingdom*, who, with all their towering expectations, *shall be cast out*, and doomed to hopeless *sorrow* and to everlasting *darkness!* Mat. viii. 10. 11 12

May *Almighty Grace* awaken those who are now ignorant of the value and importance of the *blessings* of the gospel; and excite those *holy desires* after them, which may prevent that *impatience* and *envy*, that *rage* and *despair*, with which they must otherwise view them at an unapproachable distance; yea, view them possessed by multitudes, whom they are now most ready to despise!

SECT. LVI.

After having quitted the multitude who crowded in upon him, and reposed himself that night at Capernaum, Jesus goes the next day to Naim, and raises the son of a poor widow from the dead. Mark III. 19—21. Luke VII. 11—17.

MARK III. 19.

AND they went into an house.

MARK III. 19.

NOW after Jesus had performed this miracle *and* was prevented thus from going to the centurion's, before he left Capernaum with his twelve new-chosen apostles, *they went into an house*[a], where he commonly resided while he was SECT. lvi. Mark III. 19.

[a] *They went into an house.*] We must conclude, from the manner in which Mark connects this with the *names of the apostles*, that it happened very quickly *after their being chosen.* The other *evangelists* inform us of some previous events which happened in the mean time; but they might be dispatched in a few hours. This therefore is

SECT. lvi.

was in that city. *And the multitude*, that had been standing in the plain, *assemble again* about the doors and windows of the house; and, animated by the illustrious miracle he had just performed on the centurion's servant, they pressed *so* eagerly upon him, *that they* of the family *could not so much as eat bread*, though it was the proper hour for it. *And, when his friends had heard [of it,]* that he was so intent upon his work as to go out of doors again to preach to the people, *they went out* after him, *to lay hold on him*, and importune him to come in; *for they said, He is transported too far*[b]; not to allow himself time for his meals, after all the watchings of the last night, and the fatigue of this day[c].

Mark III. 20.

20 And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.

21 And, when his friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

And, Jesus having so far yielded to their importunity as to repose himself that evening there, *it came to pass on the next day, that he went* from Capernaum *to a city called Naim*[d]; *and many of his disciples went* thither *with him, and a great multitude* of others. *And, when he approached the gate of the city*, a circumstance happened, which proved the occasion of one of the most memorable miracles of his life. For *behold*, the corpse of *a dead person was carried out* in funeral procession

Luke VII. 11.

Luke VII. 11. And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she

is undoubtedly the *proper place* for *these verses*; and it is strange that Le Clerc and others should have placed them before the sermon in the plain. (See Luke vi. 17—20, p. 283, 284.] I suppose this was after the *cure* of the *centurion's servant*, as the word εισελθοντι, (Mat. viii. 5.) seems to intimate that *Christ* was then *entering Capernaum*; and the multitude was not yet dismissed when *that cure* was wrought. (Mat. viii. 10.)

[b] *They said, He is transported too far*: οτι εξεστη.] Our manner of rendering these words, *He is beside himself*, or, *He is mad*, is very offensive. One can hardly think *Christ's friends* would speak so contemptibly and impiously of him; and, if *that sense* must necessarily be retained; it would be much more decent to render the clause, *It* that is, *the multitude* mentioned in the *verse before*) *is mad*, thus unseasonably to break in upon him. But 2 Cor. v. 13. is the only passage in the *New Testament* where the word has this signification. It generally signifies to be *greatly transported*, or, as we express it in a word derived from this, to be *thrown into an ecstasy*. (Mark ii. 12. v. 42; vi. 51. Luke viii. 56. and Acts ii. 7, 12. xii. 16.) And, though the *Seventy* sometimes use it for *fainting away*, (Gen. xlv. 26. Josh. ii. 11. and Isa. vii. 2.) I do not find it ever signifies *that faintness* which arises from excess of labour or want of food: but *our Lord's attendants* seem to have feared lest *his zeal* and the present *fervency of his spirit*, should have been injurious to his health.

[c] After all the watchings of the last night, and the fatigue of this day.] Compare Luke vi. 12. & *seq.* sect. lii. whence it appears *our Lord* had sat up the *preceding night*, and eaten nothing *this day*; but spent the *morning* in giving a charge to his new-chosen apostles, and the *advance of the day* in preaching to a vast auditory, and working many miracles.

[d] *To a city called Naim.*] If *Naim* was a city of the tribe of *Issachar*, and lay at the foot of mount *Tabor* (where most *geographers* have placed it), *our Lord* made a pretty *long journey*, this day, especially considering what was mentioned in the *last note*; for he must thus have travelled about *twelve miles*. Lightfoot supposes it to be the same with En-gannim, which is mentioned in Josh. xix. 21, and xxi. 29. but this lay also in the tribe of Issachar, and must have been at no less distance from Capernaum, (See *Lightfoot's Chorog. ad Luc.* vii. 11. § 3.) The circumstance here recorded might probably happen towards the *evening*, at which season *funerals* are commonly celebrated.

she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

procession (according to their manner of burying without the walls of their cities), and the deceased was *the only son of his mother, and she was a widow*, which made the case so much the more deplorable; *and* this sad circumstance, together with others which attended it, so influenced the minds of many of her neighbours, that *there was a great multitude of the city with her.*

SECT. lvi.

Luke VII. 12.

13 And, when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14 And he came and touched the bier, (and they that bare him stood still,) and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak: and he delivered him to his mother.

And, the Lord seeing her in this afflicted condition, *was moved with* tender *compassion for her;* so that he prevented any opportunity of solicitation on their part, *and said unto her, Weep not* any longer upon this occasion; for I am come to bring thee consolation and relief. *And* presently *approaching* them, *he touched the bier*, on which, according to the manner of that place and time, the corpse was laid, covered over with a kind of mantle, or winding-sheet; *and the bearers*, who were carrying it upon their shoulders, *stood still: and* with an unaffected freedom and simplicity *he said*, in such a manner as discovered his Divine authority, *Young man, I say unto thee, Arise! And*, as soon as *he* had spoken these astonishing words, the youth *who had been dead*, awakened by that almighty energy which went along with them, *sat up, and began to speak: and* Jesus, when *he* thus had shewn his power in restoring him to life, discovered too the sympathizing kindness of a friend; and, taking him by the hand, *delivered him to his mother*, in such a manner as to express the pleasure he found in changing her sorrow into a transport of proportionable joy.

13 14 15

16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

And a religious *dread fell upon all* those who were present; *and they glorified God, saying, Truly a great prophet is risen up among us; and God has* again graciously *regarded his* ancient *people*, who were in former ages so often distinguished by his favours. *And this report of him*, and of this glorious miracle which he had wrought, *went forth*, not only through the neighbouring parts of Galilee; but was soon spread *through all Judea, and the whole region that was round about;* and greatly heightened and increased the mighty expectations from him which they had long since begun to entertain.

16 17

IMPROVEMENT.

IT surely becomes *us* likewise to *glorify God* on account of *this great Prophet*, whom he has *raised up*, not only *to his* ancient *people*,

Luke VII. 16.

SECT. LVI.

people Israel, but *to be for salvation to the ends of the earth.* (Acts xiii. 47.) Welcome, thou Messenger of the Father's love!

Luke VII. 16. How illustrious thy miracles! how important thy doctrine! how beneficent and amiable the whole of thy behaviour.

11 He went from *Capernaum*, to *Naim*, still on the same blessed errand, to *do good* to the *bodies* and the *souls* of men. Oh that our lives, in their humbler sphere, might be such a circle of virtues and graces! that we might thus *go about doing good*; and might learn, by the happiest of all arts, to make the close of one useful and pious action the beginning of another!

13 Of him may we also learn the most *engaging manner* of conferring benefits; that lovely mixture of *freedom* and *tenderness*, which heightens the sweetness, and doubles the value of every favour! May *our hearts* imbibe the *same temper*, and it will diffuse

14, 15 on our actions some proportionable *gracefulness!* May *our bowels*, like his, *yearn over the afflicted*, and *our hand* be ever *ready* thus gently to *wipe away their tears!* But, O gracious *Redeemer*, how impotent is *our pity* when compared with *thine!* with *thine*, which could call back lamented *children* from the *grave*, and turn the *sorrows* of a *weeping parent* into a torrent of *joy!* We are sometimes ready fondly to say, "Oh that thou hadst been *near* when the darlings of our hearts were snatched away from us, and we left them in the dust!" But thou indeed wast *near*; for *thou hast the keys of death and the unseen world!* And this we know, that, if our beloved *children* are *sleeping* in thee, *thy voice* shall at length awaken them; and thou wilt *deliver them to us*, to *die no more*; and wilt *thyself* graciously *take part* in that mutual and lasting *joy* which thou shalt give to us and to them.

SECT. LVII.

John the Baptist sends two of his disciples to Jesus, to inquire whether he was the Messiah; and Jesus answers them in a convincing, though oblique manner. Luke VII. 18—23. Mat. XI. 2—6.

LUKE VII. 18.

SECT. LVII.

WE have before mentioned the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and given some account of the occasion of it. (Sect. xxviii. p. 156, *& seq.*) *Now the disciples of John* had the courage to resort to him where he was confined, and *informed him of* what passed: and they particularly gave him an account of *all these things* which had now lately been performed by Jesus[a]; how he had cured the centurion's servant,

Luke VII. 18.

Luke VII. 18. AND the disciples of Jesus shewed him of all these things.

[a] *All these things* which had now lately been performed by Jesus.] This is a plain argument that *this message from John* happened quickly *after the miracles* which Luke had

servant at a distance, and raised the young man at Naim to life when they were carrying him out to his funeral. SECT. lvii.

Luke VII. 19.

19 And John [when he had heard in the prison the works of Christ,] calling unto him two of his disciples, sent *them* unto Jesus, saying [unto him,] Art thou he that should come, or look we for another? MAT. XI. 2, 3.

And when John had thus *heard in* his *prison the works of Christ*, as the very persons that brought him the news of them seem to have entertained some doubt concerning Jesus, whether he was the promised Messiah or no; for their satisfaction therefore, rather than his own[b], *he called two of his disciples to him, and sent them* in his own name *to Jesus, saying unto him*, What dost thou say to this plain question, *Art thou* the great expected Messiah, whom we have so long been used to speak of by the emphatical title of *He that cometh*[c], *or are we to expect another* under that character? Answer the question as expressly as I formerly bore my testimony to thee.

20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath

And when the men who were employed by John to be his messengers to Jesus upon this important errand *were come to him, they* delivered their message with great exactness; and *said, John the* celebrated 20

had recorded in the preceding part of *this chapter*. And therefore, though Matthew has mentioned many other facts and discourses *before* he relates *this message*, yet because he asserts nothing at all as to the *order* and connection of it, (see Mat. xi. 2,) I have, with most other *harmonizers*, thought myself obliged to follow Luke, on the principles laid down above. See *note* 2, p. 244.

b For their satisfaction therefore, rather than his own.] Mr. L'Enfant, with some others, thinks as Justin Martyr and Tertullian did, that John was so discouraged by his own long imprisonment, that he began *himself to doubt* whether *Jesus* was the *Messiah*: and, agreeably to this, he supposes that when *our Lord* afterwards says, *Happy is he that is not offended in me*, he meant it as a *caution to John*, that he should be upon his guard against so dangerous a temptation. But, considering what clear *evidence* John had before received by a miraculous sign from heaven, and what express and repeated *testimonies* he himself had borne to Jesus, I cannot imagine this to have been possible; especially as he foresaw, and foretold, that he must himself quickly be laid aside. (John iii. 30, p. 153.—But *his disciples* might very probably *be offended* at this circumstance, as well as at the *freedom* of *Christ's* conversation, so different from the *austerity* used among them; and therefore he might think it necessary to put them in the way of farther satisfaction: not to say, that the *warmth of John's temper* might render him something uneasy at the *reserve* which Christ maintained: and that he might imagine it agreeable to the general design of his own office, as *his forerunner*, thus to urge a more express declaration. For these reasons, I chuse to *render* and *paraphrase* it thus, rather than with Limborch (*Theol. Christ.* lib. iii. cap. 11. § 14.) to translate it, *Thou art he that should come, and do we look for another?* that is, We do not expect any *Messiah* but thee: so understanding it, as a repeated *testimony*, which John bore by *proxy* when he could no longer do it in his *own person*. All the spirit of *Christ's answer* would be lost, if we were to understand the message in this sense.

c *He that cometh*: ὁ ἐρχόμενος.] It seems that, by their speaking of the *Messiah* by this phrase, (*He that cometh*, or, *He that is coming*,), the pious Jews in the most lively manner expressed their confident *expectation* of him, and their eager *longing* for his appearance, as the greatest and most welcome *messenger* of God to man, and the most desirable person that *ever did*, or *should come* into the world. (See Mark xi. 9, 10. and compare Psal. cxviii. 26. Dan. vii. 13. Hab. ii. 3. *Septuag.* Is. lxii. 11. and Zech. ix. 9. Bishop Pearson justly observes, that *this* among many other arguments, proves, that the notion of *two Messiahs*, one *suffering*, and the other *triumphant*, is a vain dream of the *modern Jews*, that was altogether unknown to the *ancients*. See *Pearson on the Creed*, p. 183.

SECT. lvii.

Luke VII. 20.

lebrated *Baptist*, whose courage and faithfulness in his ministerial office have been the occasion of his imprisonment, *has sent us to thee, saying, Art thou he that cometh*, and dost thou own thyself to be indeed the great Messiah, *or are we to expect another* under that character?

hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?

21 *Now* Jesus was determined to return an answer to their question, by actions rather than by words; and therefore *in that very hour*, while they were present with him, and were eye-witnesses of what he did (as the message was on purpose delivered before a large assembly of people, in which, as usual, there were many who came to be healed of various incurable distempers) *he* exercised the power that he had of working miracles, and *cured many* that were then before him *of their diseases and plagues*[d], and delivered them from the possession *of evil spirits, and* graciously *bestowed sight on many that were blind*[e].

21 And in that same hour he cured many of *their* infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.

22 *And* then *Jesus, answering* their demand, *said unto them, Go, and relate to John the things which you* yourselves *have seen and heard* this day, as well as those that you have been informed of by others, who have been eye and ear witnesses of my miracles and discourses: say, in particular, *That the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the* very *dead are raised: and* observe also, that I do not court the rich and the great, as impostors are most apt to do; nor do I bear a commission chiefly directed to them, as some of the prophets did; but, as you see by the auditory now around me, *the poor*, and even the meanest of the people, *have the gospel preached to them;* they have the good news of eternal salvation most freely published among them, and the blessings of it offered to their acceptance. *And* be sure you add farther, that I appear in such circumstances, that there is reason to say, *Happy is he that is not scandalized,* or stumbled, *at me*[f]: for

22 Then Jesus answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, [and] to the poor the gospel is preached. [Mat. XI. 4, 5.]

23 And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. [Mat. XI. 6.]

d *Of their diseases and plagues.*] Μαστιγας, *plagues* or *scourges*, may probably signify some of the most grievous distempers, such as *leprosies, palsies*, inveterate *fluxes*, &c. (compare Mark iii. 10. and v. 29—34.) and may allude to their being supposed to be such *corrections* as intimated the *great displeasure of God* against the persons on whom they were sent. Compare John v. 14. and ix. 2

e *And* graciously *bestowed sight*, &c.] The *original phrase*, εχαρισατο το βλεπειν, seems to express, both in how generous, and how kind and affectionate a manner, *our blessed Redeemer performed these cures.*

f *Happy is he that is not scandalized*, or stumbled, *at me.*] This was intended as an awful *admonition* to the *disciples of John* that they should themselves guard against those *prejudices* which might prevent their receiving *Christ;* and contains a strong intimation that their final happiness would be

for he must be singularly wise and religious, who is not shocked by the strong popular prejudices which lie against me. Let John consider these things in themselves, and let him compare them with those prophecies[g] which foretel that the Messiah should work such miracles (Isa. xxv. 5, 6.) that he should preach the gospel to the poor (Isa. lxi. 1.) and that many should despise and reject him (Isa. viii. 14. liii. 1—3.) And he, and, by a parity of reason, you and the rest of his disciples, may easily collect a convincing answer to the question you are come to ask, without any more express declaration from me[h]. SECT. lvii. Luke VII. 23.

IMPROVEMENT.

WE have here in *John the Baptist* a very edifying instance of a most candid and pious temper. How solicitous was he to remove those *scruples* from the minds of *his disciples* which, perhaps, their excessive *fondness for him* might have occasioned? He wisely *sends them* to converse with *Jesus* themselves: and surely they who most accurately inquire into the *credentials* he brings, will be most effectually convinced and impressed by them. Ver. 18 19

Let us, when tempted to doubt of the *truth of Christianity*, recollect the various and unanswerable *proofs* of it, which are summed up in these comprehensive words; arising from the *miracles* and *character* of our *Redeemer*, and the *prophetic testimony* that was borne to him. Let us particularly rejoice that *the poor have the gospel preached;* and that the *blessings* of it are offered to enrich the souls of those, whose bodily necessities we often *pity*, without having it in our power to *relieve* them. 22

And,

be determined by the regards they should pay to him, as well as that these *prejudices* should generally prevail to men's ruin. See *note* c on Mat. v. 29, p. 211.

g Compare them with those prophecies.] Archbishop Tillotson has largely shewn the *correspondence* between the *prophecies* and *events* here referred to; see *Tillotson's works*, Vol. II. p. 451, *& seq.*—Dr. Thomas Jackson has laboured the point yet more largely in the *second part* of his curious *discourse on this text.* See his *Works*, Vol. II. p. 470, *& seq.*

h Without any more express declaration from me.] Nothing could be more apposite, natural and convincing, than such an *answer* as this, which took its rise from what Christ was then doing, and rested on the most apparent *testimony* of God himself in astonishing *miracles*, to which they knew *their master* made no pretences (see John x. 41.) *miracles* of so beneficent a nature, that no *austerities* of a retired life were by any means comparable to them; and *miracles* receiving an additional lustre from their being foretold by *a prophet* many ages before (see *note* i on John ii 22, p. 139.) and even by Isaiah the prophet, by whom *the Baptist* was so particularly described, that as *he himself* had frequently referred to him (Mat. iii. 3. Luke iii. 4—6. and John i. 23.) so *his disciples* must, no doubt, have made themselves peculiarly familiar with his writings.—These, and many other particulars, are set in a most beautiful light by the masterly hand of Bishop Atterbury, in his *Posthumous Sermons*, Vol. II. p. 41—50, who has very judiciously abridged what is most material in the large *discourse* of the learned Dr. Jackson referred to in *note* g.

SECT. lvii.

Luke VII. 23.

And, since *our Lord* pronounces *a blessing* upon those *that shall not be offended in him*, let us consider what those things are, in the doctrine or circumstances of *Christ*, which have proved the most dangerous *stumbling-blocks*, and endeavour to fortify our souls against those temptations which may arise from them. So *the trial of* that *faith* which is a *much more valuable* treasure *than gold which perishes, though tried in the fire*, may *be found unto praise, and honour, and glory*, (1 Pet. i. 7.) and we, on the whole, may be advanced in our way by *incidents* which at first threatened to turn us entirely out of it; as the *faith* of these *disciples of John* must surely be confirmed by those *doubts* which they had for a while entertained.

SECT. LVIII.

Jesus discourses with the multitude concerning John, and justly complains of the perverseness of that generation. Luke VII. 24—35. Mat. XI. 7—19.

LUKE VII. 24.

SECT. lviii.

Luke VII. 24.

NOW when the messengers of John were gone away to inform their master of the things which they had seen and heard, *Jesus began to speak unto the multitude* that still surrounded him, *concerning John* the Baptist, and to inquire into the reason of their having formerly flocked after him as they had done. I know (said he) that many of you were of the number of his hearers, and were baptized by him: now I would seriously ask you, and advise you attentively to ask yourselves, *What went you out into the wilderness* in which he preached, *to behold?* You did not surely go on any trifling occasion, or for a mere amusement: none of you would be so senseless as to undertake a journey to see *a reed*, or a bulrush *shaken by the wind*, nor can you say you found him wavering in his conduct, or inconsistent in the testimony that he bore to me.

LUKE VII. 24.

AND when the messengers of John were departed, [Jesus] began to speak unto the people concerning John; What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? [MAT. XI. 7.]

25 *But what* then *went you out to see?* You could not go with any expectation to find *a man* in such a place, *dressed in soft garments* of the finest silk, and living in an elegant and sumptuous way: for, *behold, they that wear a splendid dress, and live luxuriously, are* to be sought *in royal palaces* rather than in a rough and barren wilderness; and you well knew that John's manner of living was plain and austere, such as suited the message he brought, and illustrated his integrity in delivering it.

25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled and live delicately, are in kings courts. [MAT. XI. 8.]

But

26 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet, [MAT. XI. 9.]

27 [For] this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. [MAT. XI. 10.]

MAT XI. 11. Verily, I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater [prophet] than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he. [LUKE VII. 18.]

SECT. lviii.

But once more I would ask you, *What did you then go out to see?* Are you not ready to allow that you went out to see *a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a* common *prophet.* Luke VII. 26. *For this is the* very *person of whom it is written,* 27 (Mal. iii. 1.) "*Behold,* O my Son, *I send my* appointed *messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee,* and in a proper manner introduce thee into the world."

Wherefore *I assuredly say unto you,* That *among* all *those that have been born of women,* or the whole race of mankind in all former ages, *there hath not arisen a prophet greater than John the Baptist;* for as he is, with regard to his moral and religious character, one of the best of men, so he has some peculiar honours superior to any prophet of former generations[a]: *nevertheless,* there is a sense in which *he that is least in the kingdom of heaven,* not only in its final glories, but even here on earth, *is greater than he;* for my ministers, and people in general, shall receive superior supplies of the Spirit, and know many important truths relating to my gospel, which have not been revealed to John himself. Mat. XI. 11.

LUKE VII. 29. And all the people that heard *him,* and the publicans, justified God,

He is now laid aside from his ministry, yet I would have you to reflect upon the consequences of his preaching, and to consider the success of it: *and* you must needs remember that when he came and preached the baptism of repentance, and publicly proclaimed that the Messiah was at hand, *all the people* in general *hearing* [*him*] preach[b], *and* even *the publicans* themselves, *justified God,* and testified their approbation of the Divine scheme[c] in sending such an Ambassador, by Luke VII. 29.

[a] Superior to any prophet of former generations.] The obvious sense of what is here expressed, together with the following words, does plainly limit it to *them alone.* And it might properly be said that John was *greater* than any of the *ancient prophets* on account of his wonderful conception and birth, his excellent knowledge of gospel-mysteries, (see especially John iii. 27. & *seq.* sect. xxvii.) his express testimony to the Messiah, and his remarkable success in making way for him: John was also himself the subject of ancient prophecies, and long expected by the church.

[b] *All the people* in general *hearing him preach.*] The reader will observe that (with Grotius) I take these to be *the words of Christ,* continuing his discourse; whereas *our translation* seems rather to intimate they are the *reflections* of Luke on the sentiments of those who are now *hearing Christ.* I long considered them in this view; but it now seems to me so evident, from the most ancient *manuscripts* and *versions,* that the words, *And the Lord said,* at the beginning of ver. 31, were not in the *original,* that I could not but connect and render them thus. Nevertheless I shall shew so much regard to the *common reading* as to add (in *note* h below) the *version* and *paraphrase* in that sense and connection; submitting it, on the whole, to the learned reader to judge as he shall think proper; but must first desire him to consult Grotius, Dr. Mill and the *Polyglot.*

[c] *Justified God,* and testified their approbation, &c.] From the *opposition* between those

SECT. lviii.

by professing to fall in with the design of his appearance, and *being* accordingly *baptized with the baptism of John*, humbly confessing their sins and declaring their repentance. *But the* proud *Pharisees, and doctors of the law*, to their own unspeakable detriment, *rejected the* gracious *counsel of God* addressed *to them, not being baptized by him*, when they saw how plainly he dealt with them and their brethren[d].

God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

Luke VII. 30.

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

But though these great *and* learned men despised him, yet the good effects of his ministry on others are still apparent; for *from the days of John the Baptist*, or from the time in which he bore his public testimony to an approaching Messiah, *even to the present time*[e] the spirits of men are so raised and animated by a desire after *the kingdom of heaven*, that it *is* (as it were) *attacked with violence*, like a besieged city; men of all sorts are pressing to get into it, *and the violent seize it* with eagerness[f]: multitudes are flocking around me, to be instructed in the nature of my kingdom; and some of most licentious characters, who have been looked upon as little better than ruffians and bravoes, seem resolutely set on securing it; while others of graver and fairer characters are found to neglect it. (Compare Luke xvi. 16.)

Mat. XI. 12.

MAT. XI. 12. And from the days of John the Baptist, until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

13 This is a new, and very wonderful event. *For till* [*the time of*] *John* the Baptist, *all the prophets prophesied, and the law* of Moses, as explained by them, was the only revelation of God's will to the people of Israel; which, so far as it related to me, was but an obscure intimation of what men

13 For all the prophets, and the law, prophesied until John.

those that *justified God* and those that *rejected his counsel*, it is plain that *to justify* here signifies to *approve and vindicate*. Compare ver. 35. (at the end of *this section*); Rom. iii. 4. and 1 Tim. iii 16.

d How plainly he dealt with them and their brethren.] Of this see the *paraphrase* on Luke iii. 10. p. 101.

e *From the days of John the Baptist even to the present time.*] Sir *Isaac Newton* (on *Prophecy*, p. 159.) urges this as an argument to prove that some *considerable time* must have elapsed since *John's imprisonment*. But, on the common *hypothesis*, it might be *near a year*; and *our Lord* might probably include some time of his ministry *preceding his imprisonment*: so that we cannot be much assisted in our *calculations* by *this text*.

f *The kingdom of heaven is attacked with violence—and the violent seize it* with eagerness.—βιαζεται, και βιασται αρπαζουσιν αυτην.] The words of the *original* are very strong and forcible, and the *translation* I have given is very *literal*.—It seems necessary to interpret the *latter clause* as in the *paraphrase*, to prevent the appearance of a *tautology*: Yet I did not venture to render βιασται, *ruffians* or *bravoes*; because I think the *version* should be left in as great a latitude as the *original*; and I was afraid so great a variation from what is commonly taken to be the meaning of this passage, might have shocked some at the first hearing. To suppose, as a late ingenious writer has done, that this refers to the first attempts made to *destroy the gospel* in its infancy, and that αρπαζουσιν signifies *tear it to pieces*, does not appear natural in this connection; though the word must be allowed sometimes to have that import.

g *This*

men were to expect from my appearance: but John opened a much more perfect dispensation. SECT. lviii.

14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias which was for to come.

And indeed (to speak more plainly than I have commonly done), *if you will* hearken to my testimony, and *receive* [*it*,] *this* John *is* the *Elijah who was to come*[g], or the person whom Malachi describes under that name, as to be sent before the coming of the day of the Lord. (Mal. iv. 5, 6.) This is so important an intimation, 15 that I must urge your most attentive regard to it: and therefore, *He that hath ears* able *to hear, let him hear* [*it*,] and let every one that has a mind capable of reflection, reflect seriously upon it; for to understand and regard the character and mission of John aright, will have a most happy tendency to promote your receiving Him whom John was sent to introduce[h]. Mat. XI. 14.

15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

LUKE VII. 31. And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? [MAT. XI. 16.]

32 They are like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, [unto their fellows] and saying, We have piped unto you, and

[*And the Lord* Jesus farther *said*,] *To what then shall I* now *compare the men of this generation? and to what* indeed *are they like?* Reflect upon yourselves, and you will surely see the justice of the comparison which I am going to make. *They are like* a company of *little children*[i], whom 32 you may sometimes have observed, as they were *sitting in the market-place*, to be so froward and perverse in their behaviour to each other, that no contrivance could be found to please them; *and* some of them you may have heard *calling out to their companions, and saying*, What shall we do to please you, and to bring you to join with us in our diversions? We have tried all the ways we can think of: sometimes *we have piped to* Luke VII. 31

g *This* John *is* the *Elijah who was to come.*] How little there is in Mr. Collins's objection against thus fixing Malachi's prophecy of Elijah to John the Baptist, many of his learned antagonists have shewn: and I think none in an easier and stronger light than Mr. Bullock: see his *Vindication, pref.* p. 50.

h Whom John was sent to introduce.] According to the *received reading*, Luke vii. 29, 30, must be introduced here, and may be *paraphrased* thus: "29—*And all the people* that were present, *and the publicans* in particular, *when they heard* [*this*] discourse, *having* formerly *been baptized with the baptism of John, justified* and approved the wisdom of God as illustrated in it. 30—*But the Pharisees, and doctors of the law*, in whose presence it was delivered, disrelished it; and, puffed up with a vain conceit of their own knowledge and goodness, *rejected the* gracious *counsel of God towards them*; and, *not having been baptized by him*, were displeased to hear so high an encomium given to John. 31—*And the Lord* knowing how ready they were to cavil, both at him and his fore-runner, *said*, with a particular reference to these Pharisees and doctors, *Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? &c.*" Compare *note* b in this *section*.

i *They are like little children.*] It is plain *our Lord's* exact meaning is, that *the men of that generation*, or the cavillers of whom he was now speaking, were *like the children complained of*, and not *like those that made the complaint*: but, more especially in *Matthew's style*, the phrase [*it is like*] often signifies only in general that the thing spoken of may be illustrated by the following *similitude*. And so the *phrase* must be understood, Mat. xiii. 24, and 45. xviii. 23. xx. 1. and xxii. 2.

SECT. lviii.

to you a pleasant tune, *and you have not danced* to the musick; and at other times *we have* changed the ditty and *mourned to you*, or played and sung such dirges as are used at funerals, *and you have not* taken your part and *lamented* with us; but are always finding fault with every thing we do and will not be prevailed upon to join with us. Such is that childish obstinacy and perverseness that appears in you, who think yourselves the oracles of wisdom in the present age; and you discover the same froward temper in far more important instances: *for John the Baptist*, of whom I have now been speaking, *came* with an uncommon austerity of behaviour, *neither eating bread*, as others do, *nor drinking wine*, but living on locusts and honey and water in the wilderness; *and you say, He has a devil*, and acts like a wild distracted demoniac, whom an evil spirit drives from the society of men. On the other hand, *the Son of man is come*, without any of this severity, *eating and drinking*, as others do, conversing familiarly among you and with a temperate freedom sharing in your festivals as well as your common meals; *and you say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a* fit *friend* and companion *of publicans and sinners:* thus ungratefully do you injure his character for that humanity and condescension which you should rather applaud. *But*, nevertheless, true *wisdom has* still *been justified* and vindicated *by all* those who are indeed *her children:* and they who are truly wise and religious must needs approve this beautiful variety in the conduct of Providence; and see that the difference in our manner of living suits the purposes of our respective appearances and is adapted to promote the general design of God's glory and man's salvation.

Luke VII. 32. and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept, [*or* lamented.] [MAT. XI. 16, 17.]

33 For John the Baptist came, neither eating bread, nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.] MAT. XI. 18.]

34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. [MAT. XI. 19.—]

35 But wisdom is justified of all her children. [MAT. XI. 19.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Luke VII. 32 How happy would it be, if we could learn to correct the natural *inconsistencies* of our temper and conduct by wise reflections and considerations! How much more improving would our *attendance* on the ministrations of God's servants be, were we seriously 24—26 to ask ourselves *to what purpose we attended!*

It ought surely to be followed with such considerations, since it is intended to lead us to *the kingdom of heaven:* a glorious prize! too glorious to be obtained by faint wishes and inactive desires.

There

There is a sense in which it still *suffers violence:* and how sad is the degeneracy of our natures, that we should exert *so little warmth* in such a pursuit, and *so much* for every trifle! Instead of that *holy ardour* with which men should *press into it,* they fold their hands in their bosoms, and lose themselves in soft luxurious dreams, till the precious opportunity is for ever gone. May Divine Grace display the *crowns* and *palms* of victory before our eyes, in so awakening a manner, that we may joyfully *seize them,* whatever *obstacles* may lie in our way, whatever must be *done,* or whatever must be *borne* to secure them! SECT. lviii. Mat. XI. 12.

Let us not, as we love our own souls, through a proud self-sufficiency *reject the* gracious *counsels of God* which are addressed to us, lest we should be another day *condemned* by *publicans and sinners.* Divine providence and grace are using a variety of methods with us: let not our perverseness and folly, like that of the *Jews, frustrate* them all; but rather let us shew ourselves *the children of wisdom,* by falling in with its measures and improving as well as applauding them. Luke VII. 30 35

SECT. LIX.

Our Lord laments over the impenitent cities of Galilee, acknowledges the Divine sovereignty in the dispensations of the gospel and invites sinners to come to him. Mat. XI. 20. *to the end.*

MAT. XI. 20.

THEN began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.

21 Wo unto thee, Chorazin! Wo unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

MAT. XI. 20.

THEN, after Jesus had in general reproved the Jews for the perverseness of their carriage under the great advantages that they enjoyed, *he began* particularly *to upbraid the cities in which most of his miracles had been wrought because they did not repent,* and believe in him[a]: And in the most affectionate and solemn manner he declared, how terrible would be the consequence of their impenitence and unbelief; and said, *Wo unto thee, O Chorazin,* and *Wo unto thee, O Bethsaida,* where I so often have conversed and taught! *for* surely *if the miracles which have been wrought in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon* of old, though they were places so remarkable for their luxury, pride and contempt of religion[b], *they would long ago have repented* with tokens SECT. lix. Mat. XI. 20. 21

[a] *Because they did not repent* and believe in him.] *Our Lord* had great reason thus to *upbraid them* on this occasion; considering how much *time* he had spent among them, and how many excellent *discourses* he had delivered, as well as how many surprising miracles he had wrought in these parts; as may be seen in several preceding *sections.*

[b] Places so remarkable for their luxury, pride and contempt of religion.] This is frequently

SECT. lix.

tokens of the deepest humility, covering themselves *in sackcloth and* lying in *ashes*[c]. *Wherefore I say unto you,* That as they never had such means of conviction as you have been indulged with and have ungratefully abused, *the condition* even *of Tyre and Sidon, in the day of* the final and universal *judgment*[d], *shall be more tolerable than yours,* who will deservedly be exposed to a much heavier weight of vengeance. (Compare Luke x. 13, 14. sect. xcvii.)

Mat. XI. 22.

22 But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the day of judgment, than for you.

23 *And thou* especially, *O* guilty *Capernaum, who hast been* (as it were) *exalted even to heaven,* not only in wealth and magnificence, (compare Dan. iv. 22.) but, what is infinitely more valuable, in the means of grace, by my long abode in thee, and continued labours among thine inhabitants: such dreadful desolation is appointed for thee, that thou *shalt* (as it were) *be brought down to hell,* being swallowed up in utter irrecoverable destruction: (compare Isa. xiv. 13—15.) And thy punishment will be apparently just: *for* surely *if the miracles which have been wrought in thee, had been performed* even *in Sodom* itself, licentious and abandoned as that infamous city was[e], *it would* have been convinced and reformed; so that, instead of being consumed by that shower of flaming vengeance, it might *have continued* in all its glory and beauty *even to this day.*

23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 *Wherefore I say unto you, That the condition* even of the inhabitants *of the land of Sodom in the day of* the final *judgment, shall be more tolerable*

24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land

frequently the case with *rich trading cities:* and that it was so with *these* in particular, may be learned from many passages in the *Old Testament,* as well as from *profane writers.* See Judg. xviii. 7. Isa. xxiii. 9. Ezek. xxviii. 2, 5, 17, 22. and Amos i. 9, 10.—May God preserve London in particular from resembling them in character, whom in commerce and grandeur it so much exceeds!

[c] Covering themselves *in sackcloth* and *lying in ashes.*] As *covering themselves with sackcloth* (or *hair-cloth,* for such it was), and *lying in ashes,* were usual expressions of *mourning;* so they particularly were made use of on days of public *fasting* and deep *humiliation for sin;* and therefore are justly introduced here, as expressions of sincere *repentance* and self-abhorrence. Compare Esth. iv. 1—3. Job xlii. 6. Isa. lviii. 5. Dan. ix. 3. and Jonah iii. 6—8.

[d] *In the day of judgment.*] Dr. Hammond understands this passage as referring to the *temporal calamities* to come on these places by the Romans; who did indeed shortly after overrun the whole country, and made dreadful ravages in some of *these cities.* See *Joseph. de Bell. Jud.* lib. iii. cap. 6, 7. (al. 5, 6.) & lib. vi. cap. 9. (al. vii. 17.) But there is no evidence that the destruction of these *Jewish cities* was *more dreadful* than that of *Tyre* and *Sidon,* and it was certainly *less so* than that of *Sodom and Gomorrah:* besides, *our Lord* plainly speaks of a *judgment,* that was *yet to come,* on all these places that he mentions.

[e] Licentious and abandoned as that infamous city was.] It is well known that those abominable cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* had long since grown into a *proverb* for wickedness and misery. See Gen. xiii. 13. xviii. 20. Deut. xxix. 23. xxxii. 32. Isa. i. 9, 10. iii. 9. xiii. 19. Jer. xxiii. 14. xlix. 18. Lam. iv. 6. Amos iv. 11. Zeph. ii. 9. Mat. x. 15. and Rev. xi. 8.

[f] *Jesus*

land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee.

tolerable than yours; for your condemnation shall rise in proportion to your more aggravated guilt, and to those more valuable mercies and privileges which you have abused.

SECT. lix.

Mat. XI. 24.

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

At that time also (as well as another that will be elsewhere mentioned, (Luke x. 21, sect. cvi), *Jesus took occasion*, from the circumstances which he then observed, *to say*[f], *I ascribe glory to thee, O Father*[g], thou supreme *Lord of heaven and earth, that* while *thou hast*, in the course of thy wise, though mysterious providence, *hid these* great *things* of thy gospel *from* those who have the character of *wise and understanding persons*[h], or from the learned scribes and refined politicians of the age, whom thou hast suffered, through their own pride and folly, to reject them with disdain; thou hast brought the humble to the knowledge of them, *and hast* graciously *revealed them to* many of the lowest and plainest of mankind, who, in comparison of the former, are but as *infants*. 25

26 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Mortifying as such a circumstance might seem, I cordially acquiesce in it; and say, *Be it so, O* my *Father, since such is thy* sovereign will and *pleasure* thus to exalt thine own glorious name, and to lay the creature in low abasement before thee. 26

27 All things are delivered unto me, of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth

And then, turning himself to those that stood near him, he said, Do not be led by the example of your great and learned men to slight and despise me; for, humble as my circumstances now appear, *all things are delivered unto me by my* almighty *Father*, who has fully instructed and empowered me for whatever relates to the salvation of men[i]: *And* such are the mysteries 27

and

[f] *Jesus took occasion to say.*] It is in the *original*, αποκριθεις ο Ιησους ειπεν; which *our translation* has literally rendered, *Jesus answered and said:* but when the words so introduced are not *a reply* to any preceding speech, I apprehend *the version* here given expresses the sense of them with yet greater exactness.—The words [*at that time*] seem plainly to prove, that what follows is to be introduced here, and consequently that Luke x. 21, 22. is a *repetition* of it on another proper occasion.

[g] *I ascribe glory to thee, O Father.*] This is one proper meaning of εξομολογουμαι, as appears from comparing Heb. xiii. 15. and Rom. xv. 9.

[h] *Thou hast hid these things from wise and understanding persons.*] God is often said, in scripture, *to do those things* which he determines to *permit*, and which he foresees will be in fact the consequence of those circumstances in which his creatures are placed, though their wills are laid under no constraint. (Compare Exod. vii. 3, 4. 2 Sam. xii. 11, 12. xxiv. 1. and 1 Kings xxii. 23.) In this sense alone could he be said to *hide those things* from the *learned men* of this age, which he revealed so plainly, that honest and well-disposed persons, though *children in understanding*, might come to the knowledge of them. Compare Mat. x. 34, 35.

[i] Has fully instructed and empowered me, &c.] I cannot, with Mr. L'Enfant, confine the sense of παντα μοι παρεδοθη merely to the *instructions* Christ had received from *the Father*: his *exaltation to supreme power and government* was so near, and so sure,

SECT. lix.

and glories of my person and kingdom, that *no one* fully *knows the Son, but the Father*[k]; *neither does any* truly *know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son is pleased to reveal him:* For I have that knowledge of him to which no creature can pretend; and it is my great errand to the world to discover his nature and will, and lead his wandering creatures into a saving acquaintance with him; A work which I undertake with the greatest cheerfulness and delight: and therefore, *come unto me* by faith, *all ye that labour, and are heavy burdened*, whether with the distresses of life, or with the sense of guilt (see Psal. xxxii. 4. xxxviii. 4.) or with the load of ceremonial observances which your unmerciful teachers are so ready to impose (Mat. xxiii. 4.) *and I will ease you* of the grievous burdens you are sinking under.

Mat. XI. 27. knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him.*

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest.

29 Be persuaded then to *take my yoke upon you, and* to *learn of me*, as my obedient disciples; *for I am meek*, condescending *and lowly in heart*[l], *and* will impose no unnecessary hardships upon you: but on such an application to me, *you shall find* that *refreshment to your souls* which you in vain would seek elsewhere; that composure, satisfaction and joy, which nothing but humility and meekness, with an entire subjection to me, can give. *For* such is the genius of my gospel, that though it will indeed bring you under some restraints, they are not only tolerable, but, on the whole, desirable: and I may truly say, that *my yoke is easy* and gentle; or, if there be a mixture of difficulty attending it, such assistances *and* encouragements are provided, that with them *my burden is light* and pleasant[m] to those who by divine grace are engaged to submit to it. (Compare 1 John v. 3.)

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

IMPROVE-

sure, that *our Lord* might with great propriety intend the *phrase* in that more *extensive sense* I have given it. Compare John v. 22. and Mat. xviii. 18.

[k] *No one knows the Son, but the Father.*] These words evidently declare that there is something inexplicably mysterious in the *nature* and *person of* Christ; which indeed appears in the most convincing manner from the account elsewhere given of *his Deity* in scripture.

[l] *For I am meek*, condescending *and lowly in heart.*] Some have apprehended that *our Lord* here intends peculiarly to recommend the imitation of his *humility* and *meekness* as what would especially tend, in the natural consequence of things, to promote the *repose* and *tranquillity* of their minds; and Dr. Watts, in a very beautiful manner, has paraphrased the words thus in his *Hymns.* (Book I. Hymn 127.) But I apprehend *our Lord* chiefly means to remind them of the general *lenity* of his temper, which would engage him to decline all *grievous impositions* and unnecessary *burdens*, and tenderly to instruct them in the way to pardon and life. Compare Mat. xii. 19, 20. sect. li.

[m] *My burden is light* and pleasant.] Χρηστον properly signifies both *light* and *pleasant;*

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. lix.

WHAT can we imagine more dreadful than the guilt and condemnation of those who hear the gospel only to despise it! How can we read the doom of *Chorazin*, *Bethsaida* and *Capernaum*, without trembling for ourselves, lest we should incur the like sentence! Such have been our religious advantages and opportunities, that, like them, we have indeed been *lifted up to heaven:* The *Lord* grant that we may not, by our misimprovement and disobedience, be *cast down to the lowest hell!* that *Tyre* and *Sidon*, and even *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, may not at last *rise up in judgment against us*, and call down on our heads *a punishment more intolerable* than *that* which has fallen upon *them*, or which they must even then feel! Mat. XI. 21—24

Our vain *curiosity* may perhaps be ready to ask, Why were *these advantages* given to them that *abused* them, rather than to those who would have *improved* them better? But let us impose upon our minds a reverential silence; since the great *Lord of heaven and* 26
earth giveth not an account of any of his matters, (Job xxxiii. 13.) It is *so, Father; for so it seemeth good in thy sight!*

Still we see the *gospel hid* from many who are esteemed the 25
wisest and *most prudent* of mankind; and, blessed be *God*, we still see it *revealed* to some, who, in comparison of them, are but *babes*. Let not this *offend us;* but rather taking our notions from the *word of God*, let us learn to *honour* these *babes* as possessed of the truest *wisdom*, and adore the riches of *Divine grace*, if we are in their number, while many of *superior capacities* are left to *stumble at this stone* till they fall into final ruin.

Whatever objections are brought against *Christ* and *his ways*, 27
may we ever adhere to them, *since all things are delivered to him by the Father!* From him therefore may we seek the true *knowledge of God*, as ever we desire everlasting life!

We have all our *burdens* of *sin* and of *sorrow!* While we *labour* 28
under them, let us with pleasure hear the *gentle* and melodious *voice* of *a Redeemer*, thus *kindly inviting us* to *come unto him, that* 29
we may find rest to our souls. Let us with pleasure subject ourselves to him, and go on in our holy course with that improvement and cheerfulness which become those who learn by their own daily experience that *his commandments are not grievous*, and feel that 30
his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

SECT.

pleasant; and χρηστος, *easy*, may be also rendered *gentle* and *agreeable;* and so with great propriety may express that true *pleasure* and *cheerfulness* which are the genuine result of a sincere *subjection to Christ's government*, which is plainly the meaning of *taking his yoke.* (Compare Deut. xxviii. 47, 48. 1 Kings xii. 4. and Isa. x. 27.)—It is observable, that the word *yoke* is particularly used for *ceremonial impositions*, Acts xv. 10. and Gal. v. 1. and the word *burden* is used in the same sense, Mat. xxiii. 4. Compare Mat. xvi. 19. and *note* b there, sect. lxxxviii.

[a] *One*

SECT. LX.

Jesus accepts an invitation to dine at a Pharisee's house, and vindicates the woman who anointed his feet there. Luke VII. 36. *to the end.*

LUKE VII. 36.

SECT. IX.

Luke VII. 36.

AND *one of the Pharisees* who was present at this discourse[a], and might feel himself touched by some insinuations which it contained, under a specious pretence of respect to our Lord, though as it seemed with an ensnaring design, *invited him to eat with him* that day, taking care to have others of his own sect present to observe what passed. And Jesus, being willing to express his condescension and candour, accepted his invitation; *and entering into the house of the Pharisee, he sat down to table*, without taking any notice of the omission of some usual ceremonies of respect which so great a guest might well have expected.

37 *And, behold*, there was *a woman in that city who had* once *been a* great and scandalous *sinner*, and was still accounted infamous on account of the lewdness and debaucheries of her former life. and, *when she knew that he sat at meat in the Pharisee's house*, she took encouragement from his late gracious invitation, and determined to give a remarkable token of her reverence and love to so glorious and compassionate a Saviour; and for this purpose she *brought an alabaster ves-*

38 *sel* full *of* richly *perfumed ointment; And standing* by the couch on which our Lord, according to the custom of those times, lay down to eat, waiting *behind* him in the posture of a servant *at his feet*, her very heart was melted with such pious remorse, that in the presence of the whole company she was unable to refrain from *weeping* in such great abundance, that *she began* even *to water his feet with a shower of tears*[b]; *and*, observing

LUKE VII. 36.

AND one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him: and he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37 And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster-box of ointment;

38 And stood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did

[a] *One of the Pharisees*, who was present at this discourse.] Dr. Whitby has abundantly proved *this* to be a *different story* from that of *Mary's anointing Christ's head* a little before his death; (Mat. xxvi. 6—13. sect. cxlv.) And indeed the *difference* is so great and so plain, that it is astonishing so great a critic as Grotius should so confound them, and build so many remarks on that gross mistake.

[b] *To water his feet with a shower of tears.*] This is the proper signification of the word βρεχειν. Compare Mat. v. 45.—We are not to imagine she came with a purpose thus to *wash* and *wipe the feet of Christ*; but, probably hearing that *the Pharisee* who had

SECT. IX.

Luke VII. 38.

observing how wet they were, she *wiped them with the* fine long *tresses of her hair*[c], which she wore flowing loose about her shoulders; *and* then, to shew the warmth of her affection, *kissed his feet, and anointed them with the perfumed balsam* she brought with her, as not thinking herself worthy to pour it upon his head.

39 *Now the Pharisee who had invited him, observing* [*this*,] which, according to the traditions they maintained, appeared to him a very indecent sight, was so offended, that he *said within himself, This man, if he were* really *a prophet,* as he pretends to be, *would* certainly *have known who and what kind of woman this* vile creature *is that* thus familiarly *toucheth him,* and would immediately have driven her away with a just disdain; *for she is* such *a* scandalous and filthy *sinner,* that her very touch is enough to pollute him.

40 *And Jesus, in reply* to these uncharitable sentiments which he discerned at their first rising in his heart, *said to him, Simon, I have something to say to thee* on this occasion, which deserves thy regard. *And,* with an hypocritical profession of respect, *he says, O* thou great *Teacher*[d], I am ready to attend; and whatsoever thou wouldest offer, *say* [*it freely*]. Then Jesus immediately 41 delivered this parable as a just, yet mild reproof to his host: *A certain creditor had two debtors: one* of whom *owed* him *five hundred* denarii, or Roman *pence*[e], *and the other* owed him but *fifty: Now*

e *them* with the her head, and his feet, and d *them* with the nt.

low when the e which had him, saw *it,* ke within himying, this man, ere a prophet, nave known who hat manner of n *this is* that th him; for she ner.

And Jesus an- g, said unto him, , I have some- o say unto thee. e saith, Master, .

There was a cer- creditor, which vo debtors; the ved five hundred , and the other

vited Jesus to dinner had neglected ual civility of *anointing the head* of vine guest, she was willing to supe defect; and as she *stood near Jesus,* as so *melted* with his discourse that *ed* such a *flood of tears* as *wetted his* hich lay bare on the couch, his sanеing put off; and, observing this, she *them with her hair,* which she now *flowing loose* about her shoulders, as *ers* commonly did; and then, not ng herself worthy to *anoint his head,* l out the liquid *perfume* on *his feet.* s view all appears natural and un- ed.

ith the tresses of her hair.] So the θριξι properly signifies; and the Engord *tresses* might be derived from it. rell known that *long hair* was esteem- great *ornament* in the *female dress* are 1 Cor. xi. 15.) and *women of* re used to nourish and *plait* it, and it off with garlands and jewels, to render themselves agreeable to their lovers.

d *O Teacher.*] So διδασκαλε properly signifies, and I think expresses something more than the English word *master,* especially in the sense in which it is now commonly used. Whether this was mere *hypocrisy,* or whether it was intended as a sort of *sneer* on *our Lord,* who, though he professed himself so great a *teacher,* would allow *this woman* to use such freedoms with him, I pretend not certainly to say.

e *Five hundred* denarii, or Roman *pence.*] It is in the original δηναρια, which is well known to have been *a Roman coin,* in value about *seven pence halfpenny* of our money; so that *five hundred* of them were nearly equivalent to *fifteen* of our *guineas,* and *fifty* to *one guinea and an half.*—There is no reason to believe that there was any *mystery* intended in Christ's fixing on *these sums* rather than any others that had as great a difference between them.

f *Water*

SECT. IX.

Luke VII. 42.

Now as they had not any thing to pay, so that neither of them could discharge any part of his debt, *he freely forgave them both* the whole of what they respectively owed: and upon this it may be reasonably expected that both would have some sense of his goodness; *say, therefore, which of them* do you think *would love him most?*

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 *And Simon* very readily *replied and said, I suppose*, so far as I can judge from the circumstances thou hast mentioned, *that he to whom he forgave most* could not but have the greatest affection for him. *And* [*Jesus*] *said to him, Thou hast judged* very *rightly*, and the reflection is evidently suited to the case that we have here before us.

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 *And, turning* himself *to the woman, he said to Simon* the Pharisee, *Thou seest this* poor afflicted *woman*, and canst not but take notice of the extraordinary tenderness and affectionate regard to me that she has now discovered. *I came into thine house* as a guest, on thine own express invitation [*and*] *thou didst not give me any water to* [*wash*] *my feet*[f], though that be so customary and necessary a refreshment on these occasions; *but she has* plentifully *watered my feet with* her *tears, and wiped them* even *with the tresses of her hair.*

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.

45 *Thou didst not give me* the usual respect of *a kiss*, when I first came under thy roof[g]; *but she, ever since she came in*[h], *has not ceased*, with the greatest humility and affection, even *to kiss my feet.*

45 Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 *Thou didst not* so much as *anoint my head with* common *oil*, though few entertainments fail of being attended with that circumstance[i]; *but she*, as thou seest, *has anointed* even *my feet with* this *precious* and fragrant *ointment.*

46 Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

f *Water to wash my feet.*] Drusius supposes this may be understood as if *our Lord* had said, "Thou didst not give me so much as *water to wash my feet*; whereas some guests have *their feet washed with wine mingled with spices.*" Athenæus does indeed mention such an extravagance; but to be sure *our Lord* did not intend the least insinuation in favour of it.

g The usual respect of *a kiss*, &c.] How customary it was for the master of the house to receive his guests with such a *salutation*, to provide them with *water to wash their feet*, and to *anoint their heads with oil*, or some liquid perfume, the reader may see in many other *commentators*, and particularly in *Calmet's Account of the Jewish Feasts.* It is possible Simon might omit some of these civilities lest his brethren who sat at table with him should think he paid Jesus too much respect; and, if there was any such *slight* intended, it might be an additional reason for *our Lord's* taking such particular notice of the neglect.

h *Ever since she came in.*] The *evangelist* so expressly tells us that she heard of *Christ's being at dinner* with the *Pharisee* before she came in (ver. 37.) that I make no doubt of following *those copies* which read it εισηλθεν, *she came in*, rather than *those* which have εισηλθον, in the *first person*, which *our translation* follows.

i *Anointed my head with oil*, though few entertainments fail, &c.] How common this circumstance was, may be judged by comparing Deut. xxviii. 40. Micah vi. 15. Psal. xxiii. 5. civ. 15. and cxli. 5.

k *Therefore*

SECT. lx.

Luke VII. 47.

47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

ment. Wherefore I say unto thee, and openly declare it, both for her vindication and for thy admonition, *Her many sins*, which I well know have been exceeding heinous, *are* graciously *forgiven;* and *therefore*, as I have been the means of bringing her to repentance and peace, *she* has thus testified the high regard that she has to me, and *has loved* me *much*[k], as being persuaded that she never can sufficiently express her sense of the obligation: *whereas* thou who art over-confident in thine own righteousness, lookest but slightly upon me; as *he to whom* but *little is forgiven*, or who thinks his debt was but small, is not so much affected with the kindness of the creditor that forgives him, and *loveth* him but *little*.

48 And he saith unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

And, to renew the kind assurance of the pardon that before was granted to the woman, *he says to her*, in the presence of them all, I know the sincerity of thy repentance; and therefore now, for thy encouragement under this severe treatment, I solemnly declare that *thy sins are forgiven.* 48

49 And they that sat at meat with him, began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

And they who were at table with him, began to say within themselves, Who is this arrogant and presumptuous man, *that* not only transgresses our rules by permitting a harlot to touch him, but *even* presumes to say that he *forgiveth sins*, which is the peculiar prerogative of God himself? 49

50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

But, far from recalling what he had said, *he* openly confirmed the consolation that he before had given, and *said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee;* and as the tenderness and love that thou hast shewn have in a convincing, though silent manner testified thy believing regards to me, under the extraordinary character I bear, *go thy way in* serenity and *peace*[l], and enjoy the comfort of Divine forgiveness, 50

[k] *Therefore she has loved* me *much.*] As passionately as Clarius opposes *this rendering*, and after all the immense pains Grotius has taken to find a sense in that which *our translation* follows, I cannot but think the *connection* evidently requires that we should render *ὅτι therefore*, rather than *for* or *because*, how singular soever such a sense of the *particle* may be. And so it is, the *Hebrew particle* that answers it, is used in Hos. ix. 15. *All their iniquity is in Gilgal; for there I hated them;* or, *therefore there I hated them.* For it cannot be supposed that *Israel* is said to *sin in Gilgal, because he hated them there;* but on account of the iniquity which they committed there, *therefore* it was that *there he hated them. Our Lord* by this answer plainly shewed his knowledge, both of *their thoughts*, and of *her character.*

[l] *Go thy way in peace.*] This was an *usual form* of dismissing *inferiors*, and was an expression of the friendship and good wishes of the person speaking: (Gen. xliv. 17. Exod. iv. 18. 1 Sam. i. 17. 2 Sam. xv. 27. Mark v. 34. Luke viii. 48. and Jam. ii. 16.) Compare Luke ii. 29. p. 72. There is an apparent *propriety* in the phrase here, considering what had happened to discompose the tender spirit of this humble penitent.

SECT. IX.

forgiveness, without afflicting thyself for the severity with which uncharitable men would treat thee.

Luke VII. 50.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 50 How joyful an *assurance* must this be to a soul thus bowed down and humbled in the very dust under a sense of sin! How light did the *reproaches of men* sit upon her when she heard these *reviving words* from the mouth of the great *Saviour*, who alone had authority to pronounce them!

Our hearts surely upbraid us with *many* and aggravated *sins*; but we hear the tidings of *pardon*; let us gladly embrace it; and 41 acknowledging that not *five hundred pence*, nor even *ten thousand talents*, are sufficient to express the *greatness of our debt*; let us retain the *remembrance* of it, even when we hope that *God has* 42, 43 *forgiven it*; and let us labour, that the tenderness of our love, the warmth of our zeal and the steadiness of our obedience may in some measure be proportionable to it: and, *blessed Jesus*, how distinguished must they then be!

Let us with humble pleasure approach this compassionate *Friend of sinners*; who, though in one sense separate from them, yet thus freely and graciously encouraged *the chief of them* to apply to him, 39 though he well knew *that condescension* would expose him to the *censure* of the self-conceited *Pharisees*. May God preserve us from that arrogant *confidence in our own righteousness*, which, while it leads us to *despise some*, perhaps much dearer to him than 47 ourselves, would proportionably sink our value for the *Saviour*, and our *love* to him!

36 As for what remains, let the *candour* with which *Christ* accepted this *invitation*, and the *gentleness* and *prudence* with which he behaved at this ensnaring entertainment, teach us to mingle the *wisdom of the serpent* with the *innocence* and sweetness *of the dove*; and neither absolutely to refuse all *favours*, nor severely to resent all *neglects* from those, whose friendship might at best be very *dubious*, and their *intimacy* by no means *safe*.

39 To conclude; let us avoid that very *ill temper* which *this Pharisee* shewed in *upbraiding* this poor humble *penitent* with the *scandals* of her former life. Where we have reason to believe that *sin* has been lamented and forsaken, and consequently that *God has forgiven it*, let us cheerfully receive those whom *our holy Master* has not rejected; and if the remembrance of *former irregularities* cannot be entirely lost, let it only engage us to magnify the *riches of Divine grace* towards such persons, and to rejoice with them in the display of it.

SECT.

SECT. LXI.

Our Lord, attended by some pious women, takes another progress, in which he casts out a demon; and, having vindicated himself from the blasphemous charge of a combination with Satan, warns the Pharisees of the danger they were in of committing the unpardonable sin. Luke VIII. 1—3. XI. 14, 15, 17—23. Mat. XII. 22—32. Mark III. 22—30.

Luke VIII. 1.

AND it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching, and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; and the twelve *were* with him.

Luke VIII. 1.

sect. lxi.

Luke VIII. 1.

NOW, in pursuance of the great design which Jesus had been prosecuting in his ministry wherever he had been, *it came to pass afterwards* (or after the events related above) *that he travelled through every city and village* in those parts; *preaching* in every place, *and publishing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God*, which he was now about to erect among the children of men: *and the twelve* apostles, whom he had lately chosen, *were with him*; as he thought it proper they should be for some time, that they might be farther instructed for their work, and that their having been thus publicly seen in his train might promote their reception when they afterwards came to any of these places by themselves.

2 And certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

2 *And* there were also *some women* with him *who had been cured of* grievous disorders brought upon them by *evil spirits. and* of other *illnesses*; [*particularly*] *Mary. who was called Magdalene*, from Magdala, the place of her residence[a]; a remarkable person, *out of whom had been cast* no less than *seven demons*[b], who, probably for the sins of her former life, were suffered by God to agitate and torment her in such a manner as to render her a spectacle of great

a *Called Magdalene*, from Magdala the place of her residence.] As Ιησους Ναζαρηνος, *Jesus of Nazareth*, or *Jesus the Nazarene*, so Μαριαμ Μαγδαληνη, which we are used to render *Mary Magdalene*, might as well be rendered *Mary the Magdalene*, or *Mary of Magdala*, which was a town in Galilee beyond Jordan. See Mat. xv. 39.

b *Out of whom had been cast seven demons.*] This is supposed by Gregory to have been only *a proverbial expression* to signify that she was a person of a *very bad character*, whom Jesus *reclaimed*; and Mr. L'Enfant advances the same interpretation, as agreeable to the *Jewish style*: but, as so much is spoken of *dispossessions* in the proper sense of the word by Luke, it is most natural to suppose *this* to be referred to here. Some have thought she was *the sinner* mentioned Luke vii. 37. but there is no certain proof of it. And the conjecture of those who suppose her to be the *sister of Lazarus*, whose husband might have lived at Magdala, is rather more improbable: since when Luke and John mention *Mary of Bethany*, they never intimate that it was *Mary Magdalene*. See *Calmet's Dictionary*.

SECT. lxi.

great horror. *And* there attended him besides, *Joanna, the wife of Chuza, a steward* in the court *of* king *Herod*; who yet did not think such an attendance beneath the dignity of her family: *and* one *Susannah, and many other [women]; who*, being persons of some considerable rank and circumstances in life, *assisted him with their possessions*, which they cheerfully employed to supply him and his disciples with necessaries, as occasion required.

Luke VIII. 3.

3 And Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others; which ministered unto him of their substance.

Mat. XII. 22. While he was making *then* this tour about Galilee and the neighbouring parts, *there was brought to him one possessed by a demon*[c], who had been rendered by this means both *blind and dumb: and he* immediately expelled the evil spirit, and *cured him* that had been so miserably afflicted by it; *so that it came to pass*, that *when the demon was gone out* at the command of Jesus, *the* person that but just before was *blind and dumb, both spake and saw*[d].

MAT. XII. 22. Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him; insomuch that [it came to pass, when the devil was gone out,] the blind and dumb both spake and saw. [LUKE XI. 14—]

23 *And all the* multitude of *people* round him, perceiving he had healed the poor distressed creature in an instant, *were astonished* at the sight, *and said, Is not this the* Messiah, the long expected *Son of David?*

23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David? [LUKE XI.—14.]

24 *But the Pharisees* who were with him, *and* particularly *the scribes, who came down from Jerusalem*, and still attended his progress to make their remarks on what passed, *hearing [this]* natural reflection of the people, and fearing lest their own credit should sink among them as that of Jesus advanced, gave the most malicious and unreasonable turn to the matter which can be imagined: for they *said, This* is so bad a *[man]* and so notoriously transgresses the traditions of the elders and the law of God[e], that he *is* certainly

24 But when the Pharisees, [and the scribes which came down from Jerusalem] heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* [hath Beelzebub,

c *Then there was brought to him one possessed by a demon.*] This miracle appears to have been performed on the *morning of that day* on which Christ delivered the *parables* of the *sower*, &c. (compare Mat. xiii. 1, *& seq.* sect. lxv.) and on *the evening* of which he *crossed the sea, stilled the tempest*, and went into the country of the *Gadarenes*, where he *dispossessed the legion*. (See Mark iv. 35, *& seq.* sect. lxix.) This is the reason of introducing it here, as most *critics* do; and no *other story*, not yet inserted, can claim a place before it; therefore Matthew and Luke, in their *different order*, are *transposed* to agree with Mark on that grand foundation laid down in *note* k on Mark i. 18, p. 184.

d *The blind and dumb both spake and saw.*] We have before observed that κωφος often signifies both *deaf and dumb* (see *note* k on Luke i. 22, p. 34.) but, as it is not said that Christ gave this man his *hearing*, it is plain he was not *deaf*. And indeed it appears worthy of remark that we hardly ever meet with entire *blindness* and *deafness* in the same person.

e So notoriously transgresses the traditions of the elders and the law of God.] There is sufficient reason to conclude that *the Pharisees* must go on this principle in this random *charge*, which had not the least shadow of a proof; and it was usual with them to esteem a contempt of their *traditions*

zebub, and] doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince [Luke, *or* the chief] of the devils. [Mark III. 22. Luke XI. 15.]

tainly himself *possessed by Beelzebub, and does not cast out demons but* only *by* a secret combination with *Beelzebub*; who being *the prince* [*or*] *chief of the demons*[f], with a view to confirm his own interest, expels other inferior spirits under his command, at the word of this Jesus, who therefore deserves to be put to death as a magician (Exod. xxii. 18.) rather than to be thus extolled as the Messiah. SECT. lxi. Mat. XII. 24.

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, [and he called them unto him,] and said unto them, [in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?] Every kingdom divided against itself [cannot stand, *but*] is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand, [Luke, *but* falleth.] [Mark III. 23—25. Luke XI. 17.]

And, Jesus knowing their thoughts, though he was not within hearing of those reflections, *called them to* come near *him, and said to them in* the following *parabolical expressions*, before all the people, *How can* you possibly imagine that, in such circumstances as these, *Satan* should *cast out Satan*[g]? It may surely be laid down as a maxim, That *every kingdom divided against itself cannot* long *subsist* in flourishing circumstances, [*but*] quickly sinks into contempt, and *is brought to* utter *desolation; and every* smaller society, if it be but a *city, or* a single *family, divided against itself, shall not* long *stand*, [*but*] 25

26 And if Satan [rise up against himself and] *falleth* into inevitable ruin. *And*, therefore, *if Satan rise up against himself*, as he certainly does 26

tions as equally criminal with the most express contempt of the *law*. It is also well known that they *charged Christ* both with *sabbath-breaking* and *blasphemy*.

f *Beelzebub, the prince, or chief of the demons.*] There is no doubt but this was spoken by the Jews not merely in a general way of *a prince of the demons*, or of one of their chiefs, but in particular of him whom they considered as *the prince* of the powers of darkness: for in Mark it is ἐν ἀρχοντι, though Matthew and Luke express it *without the article*; and the following words shew he was supposed to be the same with *Satan*, the grand adversary. One of the titles given him was *Beelzebub*, or *Baalzebub*; and *a Philistine idol* who had his temple at Ekron (and is supposed by some to answer to the Grecian Pluto, *Jurieu, Hist. des Dogmes*, p. 631.) was plainly called by *this name* (See 2 Kings i. 2, 3.) which is well known to signify *The Lord of flies*; this idol being worshipped, as some tell us, under the figure of a *fly* or *beetle*, as defending people from these insects; though others think it may allude to the vast multitude of *flies* with which the slaughter of their sacrifices was infested in the heathen temples, while (as the Jews report) *no fly* was ever seen to come upon the flesh of any sacrifice in the temple at Jerusalem. (See *Selden de Diis Syris Syntag.* ii. cap. 6.) But why the Jews should speak of him under this title as *the chief of the devils*, it is difficult to say; unless (as Heinsius conjectures, rather than proves) the Hebrew word Zebub signified *a deadly kind of insect*, whose sting was mortal, and which was therefore looked upon as a fit *emblem* of the *mischievous hosts* commanded by this *prince of the power of the air*.—The title in the Greek is Βεελζεβουλ, *Beelzebul*, which signifies *The lord of a dunghill*, and seems to be a contemptuous change of the former name, by which it was intimated that the noblest of the *heathen deities* were fitter to dwell on *a dunghill* than to be worshipped in a magnificent *temple*.

g *Satan should cast out Satan.*] This answer of *our Lord* demonstratively proves that *Beelzebub* and *Satan* are names for the *same person*; and, consequently, that *Satan* was considered as the *prince* of those *demons* who were cast out by Christ, and who are elsewhere represented as his *angels*; so that it must disprove every *hypothesis* inconsistent with this assertion. It may not be improper to add here, that the Jewish rabbies call every *demon* by the name of *Satan*, and often use the name in the *plural number*. So they call *Sammael*, which is but another name for *Beelzebub*, Rosh kol hassatanim, *the head or prince of all the Satans*. See *Casaubon in loc.*

h In

SECT. lxi.

does if he join with me to confirm a doctrine so evidently opposite to his nature and subversive of his kingdom; *and* if he assist in such a cause to *cast out Satan*[h]; it will be evidence from hence that *he is divided against himself;* and *how then shall his kingdom subsist?* It plainly follows that, in such a case, *he cannot stand, but has* contributed himself to put *a* speedy *period* to his own kingdom. But, as you never can suppose that such a crafty and sagacious spirit would in so weak a manner hasten his own confusion and defeat, you therefore, upon this account, must give up that uncharitable, inconsistent charge you have been ready to insinuate and urge against me, and must appear to have been guilty of the most extravagant absurdity, *because you* scruple not to *say that I cast out demons by* the help of *Beelzebub.*

Mat. XII. 26.

and] cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? [he cannot stand, but hath an end;] [LUKE, because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.] [MARK III. 26. LUKE XI. 18.]

27 *And if* indeed you will be still so obstinate as to assert that *I cast out demons by* the assistance of *Beelzebub*, you may as well say that all miracles of this kind are thus performed; and I may particularly refer you to determine, *by whom do your* own *children expel them*, who practise exorcisms[i], and are approved and extolled by you on that account, though some of them do it in my name? *Therefore they shall* in this respect *be your judges*, and condemn you of a most partial and unequal conduct. *But if* you must allow that *I cast out demons by the finger*, [*or*] *the* power and *Spirit of God*, *then* it *undoubtedly* follows, *the kingdom of God is* indeed *come unto you*, as I assert; and all the doctrines that I preach are proved by this to be Divine, and consequently worthy of your most serious and obedient regard, since it plainly shews my superiority over all the infernal powers.

27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out? therefore they shall be your judges. [LUKE XI. 19.]

28 But if I cast out devils by [the finger, *or*] the Spirit of God, then [no doubt] the kingdom of God is come unto you. [LUKE XI. 20.]

Otherwise,

[h] In such a cause to *cast out Satan.*] It is certain (as many good writers have observed) that the *force of this argument* consists in a tacit appeal to the *genius* and *design of his doctrine;* which evidently appeared so friendly to the interest of *true religion*, and so destructive to *idolatry* and *vice* in which the *kingdom of Satan* consisted, that he must really be *his own enemy*, and rise up for the subversion of *his own cause*, before he could become an *associate* with *Jesus*. See *Archbishop Tillotson's Works*, Vol. III. p. 545.

[i] *By whom do your own children expel them*, who practise exorcisms, &c.] For the proof of this fact, see Acts xix. 13. Mark ix. 38. Luke ix. 49. *Joseph. Antiq. Jud.* lib. viii. cap. 2, § 5. p. 420. *Havercamp.* and Dr. *Whitby's note;* but above all, that of *Grotius* on this passage. I do not see that there is any need of referring this to *the apostles* who had not yet been *sent out;* and if they had, they to be sure would be involved in the *same censure* with *Christ*. It is more natural to suppose that *the disciples* of *the Pharisees* are here probably meant by *their children.*

[k] While

29 Or else, how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. [MARK III. 27.]

Otherwise, it is evident I could not do this: for *how can any one* break and *enter into the house of a strong man, and plunder his goods*, while he is actually present to guard them[k], *unless he first* overpower and *bind the strong man*, who will be sure to do all he can to defend them! *and then* indeed *he may plunder his house* of whatever he pleases; but without this it will be utterly impossible to do it. And therefore it is plain, from all these instances of dispossessions, that I have power over Satan to control and bind him, and consequently that I act by a Divine commission. SECT. lxi. Mat. XII. 29.

LUKE XI. 21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

But still it is not to be thought, the contest will be carried on without an opposition from the enemy, nor can it fail of giving some alarm: for *while a strong man, completely armed*[l], *guards his* castle or *palace* from invasion and attack, *his goods are in* a profound *peace*[m], and his prisoners, hard as their situation may be, are afraid to make any attempt to regain their liberty; and such is the quiet which there seems to be while Satan reigns without any control. Luke XI. 21

22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon *him*, and overcome him, he taketh *from him* all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

But when one stronger than he, or of more power than the warrior I have mentioned, *invades* his garrison, *and conquers him, he takes away all his complete armory in which he placed his confidence, and distributes his spoils* among his followers. So shall you see the infernal powers yet more completely baffled and spoiled by me, and my faithful servants adorned by the trophies won from them. 22

MAT. XII. 30. He that is not with me, is against me; and he that

While therefore you are animated by such views, you ought not to allow yourselves even in a state of neutrality aud indifference: for I must tell you, That *he that is not* cordially *with me* Mat. XII. 30

[k] While he is actually present to guard them.] This the course of the argument plainly supposes; and the case in question proved *the presence of Satan*.

[l] *While a strong man*, &c.] The reader will observe that (contrary to most others) I have introduced in *this section*, Luke xi. 14—23, as parallel to Mat. xii. 22—30, and Mark iii. 22—27. The reason is, because as there appeared to me no certain evidence that the *miracle* and *discourse* recorded by Matthew were afterwards repeated at another time (see *note* [a] on Luke xi. 37, sect. cx), so I was not willing to insert so long a discourse *twice*: yet it is not impossible it might occur again; and if any, on the whole, judge it most probable it did, they may turn back thence, and read *these verses* again.——I likewise thought that *the discourse*, with *the additions* from Luke, appeared most complete and beautiful.

[m] *His goods are in* a profound *peace*.] *Our Lord* here (as also Luke x. 17—20, sect. cvi.) evidently takes occasion, from having spoken of *dispossessions*, to turn his discourse to that grand and complete *victory over Satan*, of which *these miracles* were *a specimen*; and these words refer not to *demoniacs*, who were far from being *in peace* or quiet, but to the case of *sinners*, who by the arts of *Satan* are lulled into a state of *security* and *confidence*, while in the hands of their greatest *enemy*, and in the way to final destruction.

[n] *He*

SECT. lxi.

Mat. XII. 30.

me as a friend, *is* indeed *against me* [n], and will accordingly be treated as one that is an enemy to me; *and he that does not* set himself according to his ability to *gather* subjects into my kingdom *with me, is* but vainly and foolishly *scattering abroad*, and, however otherwise employed, wastes his time and labour in what will at last turn to no solid account [o]. Much more criminal and fatal then must the character and conduct of those be, who with deliberate implacable malice oppose my cause and are resolved at all adventures to do their utmost to bear it down, as you are attempting to do by these vile insinuations which you have now suggested.

that gathered not with me, scattereth abroad. [LUKE XI. 23.]

31 I therefore give you the most solemn and compassionate warning of your danger; for you are on the brink of a most dreadful precipice. That malignity of heart, which leads you to ascribe these works of mine to a confederacy with Satan, may incline you to pass the same impious sentence on the greatest and fullest confirmation, which is to be given to my gospel by the effusion of the Spirit on my followers: and *therefore*, to prevent, if possible, such guilt and ruin, *verily I say unto you*, That *all* other *sins shall be forgiven to the children of men, and* even [*all*] the other *blasphemies with which they shall blaspheme; but the blasphemy against the Spirit* of God, in this most glorious dispensation of it [p], *shall not be forgiven to* those impious and incorrigible *men* who shall dare to impute to diabolical operation those glorious works of Divine power and goodness.

31 Wherefore [verily] I say unto you, [All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies, wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:] but the blasphemy *against* the *Holy* Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. [MARK III. 28.]

32 *And* I add, That *whosoever speaks a* contemptuous and impious *word* even *against the Son of man* himself, while here on earth in this obscure form, he may possibly be brought to repentance for it, and so *it shall be forgiven him*; and consequently even your case, bad as it is, is

32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world,

[n] *He that is not with me is against me.*] How this is to be reconciled with Luke ix. 50. see the *note* there, sect. xcvi.

[o] Wastes his time and labour in what will at last turn to no solid account.] This is a more natural sense than to take it as if *our Lord* had said, *He that does not gather subjects into my kingdom, disperses them.* According to the interpretation I have given, it is a most noble *maxim* of Divine wisdom; and happy is the *minister*, happy the *man* who attends to it.

[p] *The blasphemy against the Spirit* of God, in this most glorious dispensation of it.] After all that Archbishop Tillotson has said (Vol. I. Serm. 17), to prove that the *sin against the Holy Ghost* was *that* which *these Pharisees* committed, in ascribing *the miracles of Christ to Satan*, I have rather chosen to take the words in Dr. Whitby's sense; and must beg leave to refer to his *paraphrase* on the places above, and to his excellent *dissertation* on the subject, in his *fourth Appendix to Matthew*, for the reasons which induced me to such a judgment.

world, neither in the *world* to come; [hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.] [MARK III. 29.]

is not entirely hopeless: *but whosoever shall* maliciously *speak* any thing of this nature *against the Holy Spirit*, when the grand dispensation of it shall open in those miraculous gifts and operations, that will be attended with the most evident demonstrations of his mighty power, *it shall never be forgiven him* at all, *either in this world, or in that* which is *to come*[q]: *but he is obnoxious to eternal damnation*, and must irrecoverably sink into it; nor will all the grace of the gospel, in its fullest display, afford a remedy for so aggravated a crime, or furnish him with means for his conviction and recovery.

SECT. lxi. Mat. XII. 32.

MARK III. 30. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

This admonition he gave them with such repeated solemnity, *because they* had maliciously *said, he hath an unclean spirit*, and performs these miraculous works by the assistance of Beelzebub.

Mark III. 30.

IMPROVEMENT.

How *condescending* was the conduct of the blessed *Jesus* while he dwelt among us! Though he was *Lord of all*, he not only waved the pompous manner of subsisting by continued *miracles*, but likewise declined to *dwell* with the *rich* and the *great*, with whom he could easily have secured to himself a constant abode[r]. He chose a laborious *itinerant course*, and subsisted chiefly on the *bounty* of a few *pious women*, whose company and friendship he did not despise. *That subsistence* was most pleasing to him which was the greatest testimony of the *respect* and *affection* of his *hearers*, and at the same time gave the greatest opportunity to testify his own

Luke viii. 1—3

q *It shall never be forgiven him* at all, *either in this world, or in that* which is *to come.*] It is observed both by Lightfoot and Grotius, that through a fond imagination of the final happiness of *all the seed of Abraham*, the Jews supposed, there were some sins that had not been *forgiven here*, that would *be expiated by death* and be *forgiven after it*; and that *our Lord* designed by this expression to assure them, that there was *no forgiveness to be had* for those that should be *guilty of this sin*, either *before* or *after death*; and that their expectations of *forgiveness then* would prove no other than a deceitful *dream*. (See *Lightfoot's Hor. Heb.* and *Grotius in loc.*) But it is clearly shewn by Dr. Whitby, that this was used as a *proverbial expression*; and that it only signified, *a thing should never be*, when it was said, *It shall not be, either in this world, or the world to come.*—However, as some think that it refers to the *Messiah's kingdom*, which was often called *the age to come*, I have also hinted at *that sense*; which is indeed included in the other, but does not seem to me to be so properly applied here; for if our interpretation be right, the sin could not be committed till that age commenced.

r The *rich*, and the *great*, with whom he could easily have secured to himself a constant abode.] Undoubtedly, to mention no more, *the centurion* (who had *wealth* and *generosity* enough to *erect a synagogue* at his own charge, Luke vii. 5. p. 294), would have been very willing to have received into *his house* a single Person of so *extraordinary a character*, so perfectly *temperate*, and so *easy* as to the common accommodations of life: but Christ came to bring the *gospel* to the *poor*; and the purposes of his *mission* required frequent *removes*.

SECT. LXI.

own *humility* and *self-denial*, and to pursue his schemes for public usefulness. So may his *followers*, and especially his *ministers*, always judge! And may all the *great things* they *seek for themselves* be such as lie on the *other side of the grave*, and are to be enjoyed in the presence of our *glorified Master!*

Luke viii. 1—3

Mat. xii. 22

We have seen another *triumph of Christ* over the *evil spirit*, another of those glorious and delightful instances, in which the

29 great *Captain of our salvation*, with superior strength, *bound the strong man, and spoiled his goods.* May the *victory* still be carried on *to perfection!* May his *merciful alarms* break that dangerous and fatal *peace* in which the *slaves of Satan* are for a while detained, that he may with greater advantage, and greater terror, plunge them into final and eternal *ruin!* And, in such a *contest*, may we abhor *neutrality!* With pleasure and zeal let us *list ourselves* under the *Redeemer's banners*, that we may share *his trophies!* And,

23 while others are throwing away their time, their labour and their souls, may we, by *gathering with him*, secure to ourselves *everlasting riches!*

Luke xi. 21, 22

Mat. xii. 24

We must surely be *astonished* to hear of that perverse and malignant *interpretation* which these wretches put on such convincing *miracles*; and it must move our *indignation* to see the *Son of God* maliciously charged as an *associate with Satan. If they have* thus *called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household?* (Mat. x. 25.) Let us learn to imitate that *meekness of wisdom*, with which the *blessed Jesus* pursues his *vindication.*

26 Oh that *his followers* had ever traced it! Yea, I had almost said, Oh that they had learned, even from the *union* of *confederate enemies*, the *danger* of that *house* or *kingdom* which is unnaturally *divided against itself!*

It is matter of great *thankfulness* thus expressly to hear that *every* other *sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven*; but *awful* to think

31, 32 that the *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost* is excepted. Let those, who, while they cannot deny the *facts of Christianity*, despise and oppose its *doctrines*, tremble to think how near they approach to the boundaries of *this sin*, which is perhaps more *obscurely described* that we may more *cautiously avoid* all such approaches. But let not the *humble soul*, that *trembles at God's word*, meditate *terror* to itself from such a passage; which, when viewed in its *due connection*, cannot, with any shadow of reason, be thought to belong to any, who do not *obstinately reject the gospel* and *maliciously oppose it*, when made known to them with its *fullest evidence.*

SECT.

SECT. LXII.

Our Lord goes on to caution the Pharisees of the danger of such sinful words; and answers to the exclamation of the woman who extolled the happiness of his mother. Mat. XII. 33—37. Luke XI. 27, 28.

MAT. XII. 33.

EITHER make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit.

MAT. XII. 33.

SECT. lxii.

WHEN our Lord had thus faithfully warned the Pharisees of the danger they were in of incurring unpardonable guilt, by blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, he proceeded to enforce the admonition in the following manner: Attentively consider what I have offered to you, and either lay aside your vain and hypocritical pretences to religion, or quit that malignity and wickedness which render these pretences insolent and odious; *either make the tree good, and* shew it to be so by making *its fruit* also *good; or else make*, and allow *the tree* to be *corrupt, and its fruit* also *corrupt*, if it in fact appear to be so: *for the tree is* to be *known by the fruit* it produces, which is an infallible proof of what quality it is. (Compare Mat. vii. 17, 18, sect. xlii.) *O ye* abominable *brood of vipers*, ye perverse, venomous, deceitful creatures, *how can you, who are* so *wicked* yourselves, *speak good things?* It is surely a force upon nature whenever you do it; and you will easily return to such uncharitable and impious language as we have now been hearing from you; *for the mouth* naturally *speaks out of the* overflowing *abundance of the heart.* And thus, on the one hand *a good man, out of the good treasure of the heart*, freely and abundantly *produces good things*, and scatters the seeds of wisdom and piety in the minds of all with whom he converses; *and* on the other hand, *a wicked man*, being full of corrupt affections and a secret malignity against religion, *out of the evil treasure* of his heart, as naturally *brings forth evil things*; and, even when he

Mat. XII. 33.

34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.

[a] *Make the tree good, &c.*] The sense I have chosen is that which seems to agree best with what follows. I could not acquiesce in that of Mr. L'Enfant, who supposes it as if he should have said, *Either allow me to be good, or prove the casting out devils to be evil*; for that would suppose every one who *cast out devils* to *be a good man.* Zegerus and Grotius understand it as if *our Lord* had said, "Since you cannot but allow that *my life* and the tendency of *my doctrine* are *good*, be not so inconsistent with yourselves as to suppose I am *a confederate with Beelzebub.*" And it is indeed very possible that *this* may be the sense.

[b] *For*

SECT. lxii. he labours most artfully to disguise himself and his character, breaks out like you, in some unguarded moment, into such language as betrays the shame he would conceal. (Compare Luke vi. 43—45, sect. liv.)

Mat. XII. 35.

36 *But* take heed, how you suffer your tongues to run on in this profane and licentious manner; for *I* solemnly *declare unto you, That in the* awful *day of* the final and universal *judgment, men shall give* a strict and impartial *account for every unprofitable*, and much more for every pernicious *word*[b] *which they shall speak:* and wo be to them who have used that noble faculty of speech only to vain or to wicked purposes.

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 *For* let every particular hearer apply it to himself: it is not by thine actions alone, but in some degree *by thy words, thou shalt* at last *be justified, or by thy words thou shalt be* then *condemned*,[c] as by the tenor of these, the disposition of thy heart is shewn and thy true character discovered.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Luke XI. 27.

And while he was speaking these things,[d] *a certain* pious *woman* was so transported with a mixture of pleasure at hearing his words, and indignation at the unworthy treatment he met with from his adversaries, that she could not forbear *lifting up her voice*, and crying out *from amidst the crowd*,[e] she *said unto him*, O thou Divine

LUKE XI. 27. And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lift up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked!

b *For every unprofitable*, and much more for every pernicious *word.*] Though the terms *inconvenient* and *unprofitable* are sometimes applied to things capable *much worse epithets* (compare Rom. i. 28. Eph. v. 4, 11. Tit. iii. 9. and Heb. xiii. 17,) yet I cannot think that *our Lord* here uses ἀργὸν, *idle*, merely to signify *mischievous*. We are certainly accountable for *useless* as well as *wicked discourses*, and they will be taken into that *last survey* which is to determine our character and state; which they, whose life is one continued scene of *whim* or *sneering raillery*, would do well *seriously* to consider. And it was to *our Lord's* purpose to observe it here, as it inferred, by the strongest consequence, the danger of such vile and criminal discourses as those of the *Pharisees* in this case. But discourse tending, by *innocent mirth*, to exhilarate the spirits, is not *idle discourse*, as the time spent in *necessary recreation* is not *idle time*; nor does a wise and gracious God expect from men the *life of angels*. The Jews about Kimchi's time had *a proverb* among them. That *a scholar may be improved even by the idle words of his master*; but I think Heinsius had no reason to value himself so much as he seems to do, on his attempt to explain these words of Christ as an *allusion to that.*—If any, on the whole, are dissatisfied with the account of things here given, I would beg leave to ask them, whether *unprofitable talk* be not *a sinful wasting of time?* and whether that must not render a man in some degree criminal before God?

c *Or by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*] Since both the clauses in this *verse* cannot belong to the *same person*, it is plain that καὶ here, as the Hebrew particle *Ve* in many places, is put for the alternative *Or:* and agreeably to this we find that instead of καὶ, the *particle* ἢ is here inserted in many ancient *copies.*

d *While he was speaking these things.*] Luke brings in *this story* at the end of the *parable* of the *relapsing demoniac*, which was delivered just at the conclusion of the discourse before related. And though it is uncertain at what exact time *this exclamation* was made, yet what was now said might be a *proper occasion* for it; or, if it be a little *transposed*, the reader will excuse it, as it serves for a *fit appendix* to this short *section*, and likewise prevents the more unequal length of *the following.*

e *From amidst the crowd.*] So ἐκ τῦ ὄχλυ plainly signifies; and it may thus, I think, be very properly connected with the words which follow it in the *original.*

Divine Teacher, *Happy is the womb* of her *that bare thee, and* thrice happy *the breasts which thou didst suck!* With what unspeakable delight must thy blessed mother look on so illustrious a Son? SECT. lxii. Luke XI. 27.

28 But he said, Yea, rather blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

But he modestly and seriously *replied, Nay, rather happy are they who hear the word of God* which I preach, *and keep it* in their hearts as a vital principle of holy obedience; for they will be entitled to eternal blessings, infinitely more valuable than any natural relation to me could give, or any opportunities of the most intimate converse with me, separate from such a practical regard to my instructions.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHOSE heart does not echo back the *exclamation* of *this* pious *woman?* Yet who does not too frequently forget that weighty and important *answer* which succeeded it? Let us not only *hear*, but *keep the word of Christ;* and we shall thus be *happy* in a nearer *union* with him than ever could arise from any *natural relation* to him, and shall ere long have opportunities of more noble and more delightful converse with him than those, with which *the virgin Mary* herself was honoured during the time of his abode on earth. Luke XI. 27.

Let us especially attend to those instructions we have here received, and judge of ourselves *by our fruits;* never flattering ourselves that our *hearts* are *good*, if our *lives* are *abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate:* (Tit. i. 16.) And in particular let us remember, that not our *actions* only, but the *fruits of our lips*, are to be brought into the solemn *acccount* which we must give to the great *Judge of all the earth;* and that *the day* is coming, when all our *idle* and *unprofitable talk*, which has proceeded *from the evil treasure* of a *depraved heart*, will undergo a strict examination, and we must answer not for our *actions* only, but *shall be justified* or *condemned* by our *words*. And, if *foolish* and *wicked speeches* are to be accounted for in the *day of judgment*, let us *set a watch on the door of our lips* to prevent them; and labour daily to use our *tongue* so, that it may indeed be, as it is *in scripture* called, *our glory*. (Psal. xvi. 9. xxx. 12.) Mat. XII. 33. 36 37

For that purpose, let it be our great care to lay up *a good treasure* of Christian knowledge and experience *in our hearts;* that while too many are poisoning those that are round about them with erroneous principles and vicious discourses, *the opening of our lips* may be of *righteous things;* and we may still be ready, 35

upon

SECT. lxii. upon all proper occasions, with freedom, variety and spirit, to *bring forth good and profitable things from the good treasure of our* Mat. XII. 35. *hearts;* which may be *edifying* unto those that hear us, and may go from one *heart* to another. So will *the Lord* himself *hearken* with pleasure unto what we *speak*, and exactly record it in the *book of remembrance* that is *written before him;* and, producing it at last to our public honour, will own us for *his, in the day when he makes up his jewels.* (Mal. iii. 16, 17.)

SECT. LXIII.

Our Lord upbraids the Pharisees with their perverseness in asking a further sign; and delivers the parable of the relapsing demoniack. Mat. XII. 38—45. Luke XI. 16, 24—26, 29—32.

MAT. XII. 38.

SECT. lxiii. *THEN some of the scribes and Pharisees* who were present, hearing how plainly Christ admonished and how severely he rebuked them, Mat. XII. 38. *answered* him, by diverting the discourse to another topic; [*and*] with a view *to try him, demanded of him a sign from heaven, saying, Master,* thou professest thyself a teacher of extraordinary authority, and we may justly expect some proportionable proof of it: now these supposed dispossessions which we have lately seen or heard of, are so liable to fraud and collusion, that *we* cannot fully acquiesce in them; but *would* gladly *see a* more remarkable and convincing *sign from thee*, and particularly some such celestial appearance [a] as several of our ancient prophets gave.

MAT. XII. 38.

THEN certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, [tempting *him; and* sought of him a sign from heaven,] saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. [LUKE XI. 16.]

39 *But when the multitude was gathered in a crowd* about him, eager to hear what Jesus would reply to this demand, and ready to conclude that he would now perform some wondrous and peculiar kind of miracle, *he answered and said to them, This is an evil and adulterous generation,* [b] a

39 But [when the people were gathered thick together,] he answered, and said to them, [This is] an evil and adulterous generation, [*which*] seeketh after a sign, and there

[a] Some such celestial appearance.] The words of Luke expressly fix it in this sense; and Matthew, in another story of this kind (Mat. xvi. 1. sect. lxxxvii.) expressly tells us they demanded *a sign from heaven.* (Compare also Mark viii. 11.) It is not therefore to be understood of a *sign* only of *deliverance from the* Roman *yoke*, or of the *erection of the Messiah's temporal kingdom*, as some have supposed, but rather of some *miracle* performed in the *visible heavens*, where, they seem to have thought, *impostors* had less power than *on earth.* (Compare John vi. 30.)—And they might probably conclude they had the better excuse for making such a proposal, as Moses, (Exod. ix. 22—24.) Joshua (Josh. x. 12.) Samuel (1 Sam. vii. 9, 10.) and Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 36—38. and 2 Kings i. 10.) had given *such signs.* (Compare Isa. vii. 11. and xxxviii. 8.) See *Vitring. Observ. sacr.* lib. 2. cap. 16.

[b] *Adulterous generation.*] This plainly signifies a *spurious race*, degenerated from the

there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. [LUKE XI. 29.]

a very perverse and degenerate people, [*that*] amidst such convincing miracles as I am daily performing in the most public manner, still *seeks after a* farther *sign: but no* such *sign* as their bold curiosity prescribes *shall be given them, unless* [*it be*] that one yet greater miracle, which I may not improperly call *the sign of the prophet Jonah*[c], because it bears so great a resemblance to that miraculous occurrence that will be seen hereafter with respect to me. *For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites*[d], and was miraculously sent among them by means of an unparalleled deliverance from the most imminent danger; *so also shall the Son of man*, by a yet more surprising Divine interposition in his favour, *be* made a very illustrious sign *to this generation. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish*, that swallowed him[e]; and yet afterwards came out alive and unhurt: *so shall the Son of man*, after he has been slain by the infidelity and cruelty of those to whom he comes, *be* part of *three days and three nights*[f] *in the heart of the earth*, and on the third day shall, with the ministry of an angel in a visible form descending from heaven, burst the bands of

SECT. lxiii.

Mat. XII. 39

LUKE XI. 30. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

Luke XI. 30

MAT. XII. 40. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Mat. XII. 40

the piety of their *ancestors*. Compare Isa. lvii. 3, 4. Psal. cxliv. 7, 8. and John viii. 39, *& seq.*

c *Unless it be the sign of the prophet Jonah.*] As the *resurrection of Christ* was attended with the appearance of *a descending angel*, it was with greater exactness than is generally observed, the very thing that these *Pharisees* demanded, *a sign from heaven*.

d *For as Jonah was a sign*, &c.] The attentive reader may easily observe that some passages of the *eleventh chapter of St. Luke* are *transposed* in this *section*. But I will not insist on the *necessity* of doing it, since it is very possible the same words might be repeated again: but there is so very small a variation, and the discourse is so long, that I chose to unite all the *three evangelists*, as far as might be, into *one compound text*. The reader who chuses to follow *Luke's order* exactly will find a *memorandum*, sect. cx. *note* a) of the place where *this paragraph* comes in according to that; and I must, on the whole, leave it among some other passages in the *evangelists*, where it is neither possible nor important to determine the exact series.

e *In the belly of the great fish.*] It is no where said in the *Old Testament*, that Jonah was swallowed by *a whale*; and it is the less probable, as *whales* are seldom found in the *Mediterranean*, and as the gullet of a *whale* is said to be so small as not to be capable of receiving even the *head* of a *man*. It is therefore much more probable it was *a shark*, or some other *great fish*, which, it is said, *the Lord had prepared to swallow up Jonah*: (Jonah i. 17.) And the word κητος in *Greek*, (as well as TANIM in *Hebrew*) may signify any *large fish*, as some of the *Greek lexicographers* have observed.

f Part of *three days and three nights.*] It is of great importance to observe (as many good writers have done) that the *easterns* reckoned any *part of a day* of *twenty-four hours* for a *whole day*; and say a thing was done *after three* or *seven days*, &c. If it was done *on the third* or *seventh day* from that last mentioned. (Compare 1 Kings xx. 29. 2 Chron. x. 5, 12. and Luke ii. 21.) And as the *Hebrews* had no word exactly answering to the *Greek* νυχθημερον, to signify *a natural day of twenty-four hours*, they use *night and day*, or *day and night*, for it. So that to say a thing happened *after three days and three nights*, was the same as to say it happened *after three days*, or *on the third day*. (Compare Esth. iv. 16, with v. 1. Gen. vii. 4—12. Exod. xxiv. 18. and xxxiv. 28.) See *the Miracles of Jesus Vindicated*, p. 6—8.

SECT. lxiii.

of death, and come forth from the tomb living and triumphant. And, by a natural consequence, *the men of Nineveh shall rise up in* the final *judgment with this generation*[g], *and*, by the circumstances of their case when viewed together, *shall* plead against it, and *condemn it*, as far more inexcusable than they; *for they repented* in the very dust *at the preaching of Jonah*, though he made them but a transient visit, and wrought no miracle in their presence to confirm his mission; *and, behold, one* much *greater than Jonah is here*, and you reject him, though he has been so long among you, and has performed a great variety of most surprising miracles before you.

Mat. XII. 41.

41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here. [LUKE XI. 32.]

42 And much more may it be concluded that *the queen of* Sheba, in *the south country, shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and*, by the signal instance, that she gave of her great desire to improve in knowledge, *shall* plead against the obstinacy and perverseness of this wicked age and *condemn it; since*, great as her rank and her affairs in life were, *she came from the extreme boundaries of the earth*, even from the remotest parts of the Arabian coast, *to hear the wisdom of Solomon*, that she might improve by his learned conversation (see 1 Kings x. 1, *& seq.*); *and, behold*, however contemptible he may appear in your eyes, *one* much *greater than Solomon*, both in dignity and wisdom, *is here* before you, and is daily conversant among you[h].

42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here. [LUKE XI. 31]

43 Take heed therefore how you behave to me, lest all your enquiries after the kingdom of heaven, and all your converse with me, serve only to aggravate your guilt and ruin. For, if speedy repentance

43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of

[g] *Rise up in judgment with this generation.*] Some think there is a reference in this expression to the custom of witnesses *rising up* to give their testimony; but it was not properly on the *testimony of the Ninevites* that these sinners would be *condemned*. The plain meaning is, that the remembrance of their case would be considered as illustrating the *guilt* of those that *rejected Christ*; so that here those are said to *condemn others* who furnish out matter for their condemnation.

[h] *One greater than Solomon is here.*] *Our Lord* speaks of himself in such sublime language with the utmost reason, and with perfect modesty and decorum. The humble form of his appearance, and his necessary reserve in declaring himself *the Messiah* in so many words, made it yet more expedient that by *such phrases* as these he should sometimes intimate it: and indeed his saying he was *greater than Solomon*, that most illustrious of all the royal descendants of David, was as plain an intimation as could well be given.—Here is another undoubted instance in which Luke has plainly *inverted the order* of *our Lord's* words; for the connection cannot be secured without *transposing the verses* as they stand in him. The attentive reader will observe many more instances of the same kind, and see from hence how little ground there is for what some have supposed, that Luke's account is so exact, that *all the gospels* should be regulated by *his order*. See *note* [g] on Luke i. 3, sect. i.

[i] *Through*

of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none: [LUKE XI. 24.—]

repentance does not prevent it, I foresee that (to borrow a simile from the late subject of our discourse) your case will be like that of a demoniac, who, after a little respite, falls into a more violent relapse: for, as it sometimes happens, that *an unclean spirit, when he has gone out of a man, goes about*, in a roaming discontented manner, *through dry* desarts and wild uncultivated *places*[i], *seeking* some *rest* to his own malignant nature; *and*, through the invisible restraint of Divine providence, he *findeth none: Then he saith, I will return to my dwelling from whence I came out;* and resolves to make another attack on the person he had lately quitted: *and* it may be, *when he comes* to him, *he finds*, as *it* were, an habitation *empty* of any better guest, and even *swept and adorned* to receive him[k], that is, he finds the miserable sinner unaffected with his late affliction and deliverance and still a slave to those vices which render him an agreeable dwelling for Satan: And *then*, by the just judgment of God on such an incorrigible wretch, *he goes, and associates with himself seven other*

SECT. lxiii.

Mat. XII. 43.

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house, from whence I came out: and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. [LUKE XI. —24, 25.]

44

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits, more

45

i *Through dry* desarts and wild uncultivated *places.*] Here is a plain reference to the common notion, that *evil demons* had their haunts in *desarts* and desolate places. (Compare Isa. xiii. 21. and Rev. xviii. 2.) Some may think that a desire of doing mischief might rather have prompted the *evil spirit*, of whom *our Lord* speaks, to have continued in some *city*, or other place of *public resort:* but as he may be supposed in *this parable* to apprehend that, after being *driven out*, he should for a while be under some extraordinary restraint, it seems to me a very natural and beautiful circumstance thus to represent this malignant being as impatient of the sight of mankind, and rather chusing to *seek his rest* in the prospect of a *sandy desart*, than in the view of any more agreeable scene which might renew his anguish, by presenting to him the memorials of divine goodness to the human race.—Another explication has been given to this passage, and Dr. Whitby and some others interpret it of the *devils* being cast out of Judea, yet finding no rest in the desarts of *heathenism*, because there also the *apostles* cast them out, which drove them to return again to the Jews, and to make them *worse than before:* but, though it is possible that *our Lord's* comprehensive mind might have some view to this, his hearers could not understand it thus; and perhaps, after all, the circumstances might be merely *parabolical* and ornamental.

k *Empty, swept and adorned* to receive him.] Mr. Jurieu draws a strange argument from hence in favour of *purity* (one would think he meant of *cleanliness*), that finding his former habitation *swept and adorned*, the *demon* could not *enter in* without a confederacy of *seven* yet *more potent* than he. But this is quite wide from the meaning of *our Lord*, who hereby strongly suggests that *indulging sinful habits* is like *sweeping and furnishing the house*, to invite the *abode of Satan* there; in the same manner as *purity*, *devotion* and *love*, are elsewhere represented as *consecrating the soul* for a *temple to the Holy Ghost.* (See 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. vi. 19, 20. Eph. ii. 21, 22. and 1 Pet. ii. 1—5.)—I know some judicious writers have glossed more minutely on these words, as if the meaning were, "*empty* of true grace, *swept* from gross sin, and *garnished* or *adorned* with seeming virtues and self-righteousness." But, with all due submission, especially to one very great name, by which this interpretation is patronized, I think that in this connection it enervates rather than illustrates the sense and spirit of this fine passage. Nor should I be forward to say that *a reformation of life*, without a thorough change of heart, though utterly unavailing as to his future state, brings a man more under the power of *Satan* than he was before, or makes him worthy of the punishment of being *given over to seven demons* instead of *one.*

SECT. lxiii.

Mat. XII. 45.

other spirits which are yet *more wicked* and mischievous *than himself, and, entering in, they dwell* together *there; so that the last condition of that man is* much *worse than the former. Thus also will it be to this wicked generation*[1]; instead of growing better, they will grow seven times worse than before, as both the natural and the judicial consequence of their rejecting the methods of Divine Grace for their recovery; till, as if they were possessed by a multitude of devils, they are madly hurried on to their irrecoverable ruin in this world and the next.

more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.—[Luke XI. 26.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. XII. 43—45

LET us, to whom the revelation of the *gospel* is so clearly made, *fear*, lest these dreadful things should come upon us, and the abuse of our advantages should render us an easy prey to *Satan*, and a fit habitation for the *powers of darkness*. Let those particularly fear it, who, having been brought to some serious impressions and some external reformation, are tempted to *relapse* into former vices, which would render their *latter end* far *worse than their beginning*; (2 Pet. ii. 20.) *God* has permitted some such *awful instances* to occur; and unhappy wretches, perhaps, some of them *the children of religious parents* too, who were once *not far from the kingdom of God*, have so abandoned every principle of religion, and every sentiment of wisdom and virtue, that it seems as if *seven devils* had possessed them, and were driving them headlong to destruction.

38 May we, instead of *demanding farther evidence of Christianity* than the wisdom of God has seen fit to give us, make it our care to *hear* and *obey* and diligently improve the light, we have received! May we be brought to a sincere and lasting *repentance* by
41 the *preaching of Christ* and *his apostles*, lest the *Ninevites rise up in judgment against us and condemn us!* May we own the superior
42 *wisdom* of this *Divine Teacher*, this better *Solomon*; and say, as the *queen of Sheba* to the *Jewish prince*, (1 Kings x. 8.) *Happy are these thy servants, who stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom!* for *thou speakest as never man spake* (John vii. 46.); and *in thee all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid.* (Col. ii. 3.)

But

1 *Thus also will it be to this wicked generation.*] They who have read the sad account Josephus gives of the temper and conduct of the Jews after the ascension of Christ, and just before their final destruction by the Romans, must acknowledge that no *emblem* could have been more proper to describe them. Their characters were the vilest that can be conceived, and they pressed on to their own ruin as if they had been *possessed* by *legions of devils*, and wrought up to the last degrees of *madness*.

a In

But oh, how many are *curious to know* what little concerns them, and are fond of improving their own *wit*, and trying that of others by *hard questions*, while the far more obvious and important points of wisdom are neglected as beneath their regard; as if every thing were more necessary than being *wise to salvation!* We need not travel to *distant climates* to learn this heavenly philosophy; no, it is *nigh us, even in our mouth;* and we are, on that account, so much the more inexcusable, if it be not also *in our heart.* (Rom. x. 8.)

sect. lxiii.

Mat. XII. 42.

SECT. LXIV.

Our Lord declares his resolution of persisting in his work, urges the admission of the light he was dispersing, and declares his obedient disciples dearer to him than the nearest relations could otherwise be. Luke XI. 33—36. VIII. 19—21. Mat. XII. 46, *to the end.* Mark III. 31, *to the end.*

Luke XI. 33.

No man when he hath lighted a candle, putteth *it* in a secret place, neither under a bushel; but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

Luke XI. 33.

OUR blessed Lord, in the conclusion of this excellent discourse[a], which was occasioned by the perverseness of the Pharisees, who had been impiously reflecting on his miracles and asking for a farther sign, assured them that he was not thus to be diverted from his work, but, notwithstanding all their opposition to it, yet would he still go on to bear his testimony to the truth; and to engage them to a free admission and improvement of the light which was then shining round them, he addressed the following exhortation to them: You have indeed endeavoured to oppose me with the greatest obstinacy and perverseness, nevertheless you shall not silence me; for *no man having lighted a lamp, puts it in a bye place, or under a bushel,* to conceal its rays; *but* rather sets it *on a stand, that they who come in* to the house *may see the lustre* that it gives: and thus, according to the charge that I gave formerly to my disciples, (Mat. v. 16. sect. xxxvii.) I too will take all opportunities of publishing the important message that I bring, and making my light to shine before men; and do you see, that, what I offer to you be received as it ought, and guard against those prejudices which would lead you to exclude it.

sect. lxiv.

Luke XI. 33.

For

a In the conclusion of this excellent discourse.] Luke has inserted here the following passages, which are delivered in words parallel to Mat. v. 15. and vi. 22, 23. (See the *paraphrase* and *notes* there, p. 204, 226.) Yet they appear in this connection to have a different sense, which I have expressed at large.

SECT. lxiv.

Luke XI. 34. For *the eye is*, as it were, *the lamp of the* whole *body*[b]: *if thine eye therefore be clear*[c], and free from any vicious humour, that would obstruct the sight, *thy whole body also will be enlightened; but if* [*thine eye*] *be distemperd, thy* whole *body also will be* proportionably *darkened*, and no other part can supply the defect: and so it is with respect to the judgment, which is to the

35 mind, what the eye is to the body. *See to it therefore, lest that which is* as *the light in thee, be* itself *darkness;* which it will be, if those perverse maxims be adhered to, on which you now go, in rejecting my miracles and the doctrine confirmed by them. (Compare Mat. vi. 22, 23, sect xli.)

36 It may indeed cost you some pains to reform your judgment, but the pleasure and advantage will be an abundant equivalent for all the labour that you take in doing it. *For* though the case that I but just now mentioned is so sad, yet, on the other hand, *if thy whole body*[d] in consequence of a clear eye, and thy whole mind, by means of a rectified judgment, *be enlightened, having no part* remaining *dark* through distemper or prejudice, *(being* [*thus*] *all enlightened*[e], the benefit of it will be such, that *it will be as when a lamp lights thee by its sprightly lustre*,[f] and thou goest on with security and pleasure in those paths

34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light: but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

35 Take heed therefore, that the light which is in thee, be not darkness.

36 If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, the whole, shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

b *The eye is the lamp of the* whole *body.*] Nothing is more common with the finest *ancient writers* than by an *obvious figure* to call *the eyes the lights of* the body, as our Lord here has done.—I render λυχνος *lamp*, because it had been so translated in the *verse* before, and it did not seem necessary to change it.

c *If thine eye therefore be clear.*] See *note* b on Mat. vi. 22. p. 226.

d *For if thy whole body; ει ουν το σωμα σου ολον.*] This is an unusual rendering of the particle ουν, but appeared to me necessary; for *this verse* is not introduced as an immediate *consequence* from the *foregoing*, but both of them are *collateral inferences* from ver. 34. as the intelligent reader will easily observe. And if it be admitted that γαρ, *for*, as well as ουν, *therefore*, is sometimes used with such a *latitude* as that the *former* may be understood to introduce a *reason for*, and the *latter* to introduce a *consequence from* something not immediately preceding; as also that they are sometimes used *promiscuously*; it will, I think, clear the *connection* in some places, where it will otherwise give us a great deal of perplexity, and, I fear, after all our fine-spun reasonings, but very little satisfaction. (See Luke xx. 37, 38. Rom. i. 16, *& seq.* and Heb. ii. 9, *& seq. Greek*; and many other places.) Compare *note* i on Mat. xii. 8. p. 270.

e *Being thus allenlightened.*] By allowing these words, Φωτεινον ολον, to be thus included in a *parenthesis*, we prevent the absurdity of supposing, as *our translation* would lead one to imagine, that *our Lord* says, *If thy whole body be full of light,—the whole shall be full of light.* Else the clause should be so rendered as to shew that the following words make a part of what *our Lord* asserts of the enlightened body; *it shall be all as full of light as when a lamp,* &c.

f *By its sprightly lustre.*] This seems to be the force of the word αςραπη which signifies a very strong and *vivid flame*, and is indeed most commonly applied to that of *lightning*, being here only used in the *New Testament* for any other flame. (See Mat. xxiv. 27. xxviii. 3. Luke x 18. xvii. 24. and Rev. iv. 5. viii. 5. xi. 19. xvi. 18.) —It may perhaps be an oblique hint of the

paths which would otherwise be full of uncertainty and danger. SECT. lxiv.

MAT. XII. 46. While he yet talked to the people, behold, [there came then] [LUKE, unto him] his mother and his brethren, [and standing without, *they* sent unto him, calling him, *and*] desiring to speak with him. [MARK III. 31. LUKE VIII. 19.]—

And as he was yet speaking these lively and important things *to the people*,[g] who in vast multitudes were gathered about him, *behold, there came unto him*, just *then, his mother, and his brethren*, or near kinsmen; *who standing without* and apprehending the danger to which he exposed himself by such free remonstrances and admonitions as these, *sent to him, to call him* away from so dangerous a situation; [*and*] for this end, *desired* earnestly *to speak with him*, as about some affairs of importance. Mat. XII. 46.

MARK III. 32.—And the multitude sat about him, [and they could not come at him for the press.] [LUKE VIII.—19.]

And, as the multitude sat round *about him*, there was no room for his relations to get near him; and, notwithstanding all that they could urge of a peculiar interest in him, the people were so eager in attending to him, that none of them were willing to give place, *and they could not come at him on account of the crowd.* Mark III. 32.

MAT. XII. 47. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren [without seek for thee, *and*] stand desiring [LUKE, to see, *and*] to speak with thee.—[MARK III. — 32. LUKE VIII. 20.

Therefore one of the people *said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without* at some distance, *enquiring for thee*, [*and*] earnestly *desiring to see* [*and*] *speak with thee*: what therefore must be done? Wilt thou go out to them, or give orders to the people to make way for them to come hither to thee? Mat. XII. 47.

48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? And who are my brethren? [MARK III. 33.

But he, to encourage those that were truly serious in their attendance on his preaching, *answered and said to him that told him, Who* do you think *is my mother? And who are* those whom you imagine I consider as *my brethren?*[h] 48

49 And he [looked round about on them which sat about him, *and*] stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold,

And looking round on them that were sitting about him to hear his word, *and stretching out his hand* with an affectionate regard, especially *towards* those, that were *his* constant followers and professed *disciples, he said*, What kindred or relations have I, that are nearer to me or more esteemed 49

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the *celestial original* and vigorous *active influence* of *that lustre*, which Christ diffused to illuminate and guide the mind.

[g] *And as he was yet speaking*, &c.] Matthew is so express in *connecting this story* with the preceding discourses (not to insist on Mark's following the *same order* too) that it is absolutely necessary to *transpose* Luke viii. 19. *& seq.* unless we suppose that it happened *twice*, and that perhaps on the *same day*; for Matthew assures us, that *the parable of the sower*, (to which Luke also joins it) was delivered *this day*, Mat. xiii. 1—3.

[h] *Who is my mother?* &c.] To suppose that *our Lord* here intends to put any *slight* on *his mother* would be very absurd: he only took the opportunity of expressing his affection to *his obedient disciples* in a peculiarly endearing manner; which could not but be a great comfort to *them*, and would be to Susannah, Joanna, Mary Magdalene, and the other *pious women*, who sate near him, (Luke viii. 2, 3. p. 319, 320,) a rich equivalent for all the fatigue and expence which their zeal for their *heavenly Master* occasioned. And as this seems to have been towards the beginning of their progress, it is observable that *our Lord* appears to have been peculiarly concerned for their encouragement. See Luke xi. 27, 28, p. 328. 329.

[i] *This*

SECT. lxiv.

esteemed than these! *Behold my mother and my brethren* here. *For these that hear the word of God, and practise it, are* considered and acknowledged by me as *my mother and my brethren*; nor do I thus regard these only that are now before me, but I declare the same too of all others of their character; [*for*] *whosoever shall do the will of God, my heavenly Father*, even *this very person*, of whatever place and family and station he be, *is* regarded by me as *my brother, or my sister, or mother*:[i] for this pious disposition will render such dearer to me than any of the bands of natural relation, if separate from real holiness, could possibly do,

Mat. XII. 50.

hold my mother and my brethren. [MARK III. 34.]

50 For [LUKE, my mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it; *and*] whosoever shall do the will of [God] my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and [my] sister, and mother, [MARK III. 35. LUKE VIII. 21.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. XII. 46—50.

So may it be our care to *do the will of God*, that we may be thus *dear to our Redeemer*, who ought by so many tender bonds to be *dear to us*; and who, by such gracious and indulgent declarations, as these which we have now been reading, is *drawing us* as with *the cords of a man*, and with *the bands of love!*

Luke XI. 33.

Still does *the light* of his Divine instructions shine with the brightest *lustre*, and diffuse itself around us! Let us open the *eyes* of our mind with *singleness* and *simplicity* to receive it; and make it our care to act according to it. *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord*, (Hos. vi. 3,) and thus with cheerfulness shall we reap the fruit of a *well informed mind* and a *well regulated life!*

36

May we be delivered from all those *false maxims* which would *darken our hearts* amidst all this *meridian lustre*, and turn our boasted *light* into *darkness!* Would to God there were not renewed instances of this kind continually occurring among us; and that we did not daily meet with persons whose *pretended wisdom* teaches them to forget or despise *the gospel*, and so serves only to *amuse their eyes*, while it *leads their feet to the chambers of death!*

35

SECT.

[i] *This very person is my brother, or my sister, or mother.*] This possibly might be intended as an awful intimation to some of his *near relatives*, to take heed how they indulged that *unbelief*, which so long after prevailed in their minds; (compare John vii. 3—5. sect. xcviii.) For in this case the nearness of their *relation unto Christ according to the flesh* would be no manner of advantage to them; but those that should be found to *do his will* would be preferred in his esteem before them, and be considered as united to him in a *relation* that should never be dissolved,—This is one of those many places, in which καὶ *(and)*, is put for ἢ *(or)*; for to be sure, *our Lord* could not speak of the *same person* as *his brother, and sister, and mother.* See *note* c on Mat. xii. 37, p. 328.

a *On*

SECT. LXV.

Christ, teaching by the sea-side, delivers the parable of the sower, and assigns the reason of his speaking to the multitude in parables. Mat. XIII. 1—17. Mark IV. 1—12. Luke VIII. 4—10.

MAT. XIII. 1.
THE same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea-side, [and began again to teach.] MARK IV. 1.

2 And great multitudes [LUKE, much people] were gathered together, [LUKE, and were come to him out of every city,] so that he went into a ship, and sat [in the sea,] and the whole multitude stood [by the sea] on the shore [MARK IV.—1.—LUKE VIII. 4.—]

MARK IV. 2. And he LUKE, spake by a parable, *and*] taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine; [MAT. XIII. 3.—LUKE VIII.—4.]

MAT. XIII 1.

SECT. LXV.

IN that day [a] *Jesus, going out of the house,* into which, at the importunity of his friends, he had retired for a while, *sat down by the side of the sea* of Galilee, *and began again to teach there.* Mat. XIII. 1.

2 *And such great multitudes* of people *were* again *gathered together* about him, *and came* in crowds *from* almost *every city* round about *to* hear *him*, that they began to press upon him, as they had done before in the former part of the day (see Luke viii. 19, p. 337,) so *that, entering into a ship* for the conveniency of being better heard, and less incommoded by them, *he sat down* on the vessel *in the sea*, at a little distance from the shore; *and the whole multitude stood by the sea upon the shore*, shewing the utmost eagerness to hear whatever he should say.

Mark IV. 2. *And*, to make his instructions the more agreeable to them, and the more deeply to impress them on the minds of honest and attentive hearers, *he spake* to them *by a parable* [b] concerning a sower, which shall be now related; [*and*] *taught them* also *many* other *things in parables; and* beginning

[a] *On that day.*] Matthew is the only *evangelist* who expressly *fixed these parables* to *the day* on which the preceding occurrences happened: I say, *fixes them to it*, for though the *phrases*, εν μια των ημερων, *on a certain day*; and εν εκειναις ημεραις, *in those days*, be very *ambiguous* in their signification, (see Mat. iii. 1. and *note* c, p. 95,) I cannot apprehend any thing more *determinate* than this of εν τη ημερα εκεινη, *on that day*. The day in which Luke introduces this discourse, as if it was delivered at the beginning of the progress Jesus made before the passages that we have mentioned in the preceding sections (sect. lxi. *& seq.*) is not enough to *fix the time* when this discourse was made: and we have already shewn, in several instances, that it is no unusual thing with Luke to neglect the *order of time*, and sometimes only to relate a fact as happening *on a certain day*. (See Luke v. 17. and *note* a, p. 244, and compare Luke viii. 22. vi. 6. 12, xi. 14. and xx. 1.) Matthew might know the fact we have now before us more circumstantially than Luke, though the latter's account be exactly true so far as it goes: *a reflection* which we have frequent occasion to make with respect to *all the evangelists*.

[b] *A parable.*] The word, according to its *Greek etymology*, properly signifies a *comparison* or *simile*; in which sense it is used here and in most other places; though sometimes it appears to be particularly used for an instructive *apologue* or *fable*. (Compare Ezek. xvii. 2. *& seq.*) And, as these often were expressed in *poetical language* (see Judg. ix. 7—15), the word *parable* sometimes signifies a *sublime discourse*, elevated beyond the common forms of speech, though no *simile* be used. (Num. xxiii. 7. xxiv. 15. Job xxvii. 1. xxix. 1. and Psal. lxxviii. 2.) And, as short *parables* after grew into *proverbs*, or were alluded to in them, hence the word *parable* is sometimes used for a *proverb*. Mic. ii. 4. and Hab. ii. 6.

c The

SECT. LXV. ginning with that of the sower, *in* the course of *his teaching* this day, he *said unto them:*

Mark IV. 3. *Hearken* with peculiar attention to what I am now going to say, that you may thus be taught to hear my other discourses with improvement, and may not through negligence, inconstancy, or carnality of mind, lose the benefit of my repeated instructions[c]. *Behold*, at the spring of the year,[d] *a sower went forth to sow* the ground with *his seed.*

4 *And*, as the ground lay near a beaten path, *it happened* that, *while he was sowing, some* of the seed was scattered, and *fell by the way side; and* lying there uncovered, *it was* either *trodden under foot* by passengers, *or* picked up by *the birds of the air*, who presently *came and devoured it.*

5 *And some* of it *fell on stony soil, upon a rock* that lay but just beneath the surface of the ground, *where it had not much earth* to cover it; *and immediately it sprang up*, and appeared green, *because it had no depth of earth* to make its way

6 through: *But* its verdure was very short lived; for *when the sun shone* hot upon it, *it was* presently *scorched* by the warmth of its beams; *and withered away*, almost *as soon as it was sprung up, because it had no* room for taking *root* in such a shallow bed of earth, [*and*] *wanted* sufficient *moisture* to nourish it.

7 *And some* more of the seed being thrown near the hedge, *fell among* the briars and *thorns* there; *and* when it began to shoot out of the ground, *the thorns sprang up with it*, and grew so much faster, as not to leave it either room to grow or nourishment to support it; *and* so they *choked it, and it yielded no fruit.*

8 *And the rest* of the seed *fell on good ground, and yielded fruit, which*, being well rooted and nourished, *grew up and increased* to its full proportion; *and* the ears filled, and *produced* a rich and

3 Hearken, Behold, there went out a sower to sow [LUKE, his seed:] [MAT. XIII.—3. LUKE VIII.—5.]

4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way-side, LUKE, and it was trodden down,] and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.] [MAT. XIII. 4. LUKE VIII.—5.

5 And some fell on stony ground, [LUKE, upon a rock,] where it had not much earth, and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth. [MAT. XIII. 5. LUKE, VIII. 6.—]

6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched, and [LUKE, as soon as it was sprung up,] because it had no root [LUKE, *and* lacked moisture,] it withered away,] MAT. XIII. 6. LUKE VIII. —6.]

7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns [LUKE, sprang up with it,] and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. [MAT. XIII. 7. —LUKE VIII. 7.

8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased, and brought forth some

[c] The benefit of my repeated instructions.] As *our Lord* afterwards *explains* all the parts of *this parable*, I thought it sufficient to give this general account of its *design* in as few words as possible. Dr. Clarke, by taking the contrary method in his *paraphrase* (though in this he be followed by others,) both renders the *apostle's question* as to the *meaning* of this *parable* very unnecessary and occasions a needless and disagreeable repetition.

[d] At the spring of the year.] Many circumstances below make this probable; and indeed I do not find that in Judea they *sowed* even *wheat sooner*; but to conclude from hence, as Sir *Isaac Newton* does (in his *Discourse on Prophecy*, p. 153,) that *this parable* was *delivered in the spring*, is very precarious. One might as well argue from that of *the tares*, delivered *the same day*, that it was *harvest.*

An

some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred [fold.][MAT. XIII. 8. LUKE, VIII. 8.—]

LUKE VIII. 8. And when he had said these things, he cried, [MARK, and said unto them,] He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. [MAT. XIII. 9. MARK IV. 9.]

MARK IV. 10. And when he was alone, they [the disciples] that were about him with the twelve, [came and] asked of him the parable, [LUKE, saying, What might this parable be?] [*and* why speakest thou unto them in parables?] [MAT. XIII. 10. LUKE VIII. 9.]

MAT. XIII. 11. He answered, and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given: [LUKE, but to others [to them that are without, all *these* things are done] in parables.] [MARK IV. 11. LUKE VIII. 10—]

and plentiful increase, *some* of them *thirty, and some sixty, and* even *some an hundred fold*, for one grain that had been sown [e]. SECT. LXV.

And when he had said these things, he cried out with a louder voice than before, *and said unto them, He that hath ears to hear* these important truths, *let him hear* and regard them with the most diligent attention, and seriously reflect upon that instructive moral [f] which is contained in the parable I have now been delivering. LUKE VIII. 8.

And when the assembly was broke up (after Christ had delivered many other similitudes of this kind to them, which will be mentioned afterwards), *when he* had parted with the multitude, and *was alone* in a retired place, the rest of *his disciples* [g], *with the twelve*, who had been with him while he spake these things, *came and asked him* [*concerning*] *the parable* of the sower, *saying*, We desire thou wouldest more particularly explain to us *what may* the meaning of the several circumstances of *this parable be? [and]* give us leave to ask thee, *Why dost thou* preach in such a manner to the multitude, and *speak to them in parables*, which probably so few of them can understand? MARK IV. 10

And he replying, said unto them, I thus express myself in parables, *because*, though *it is granted*, throught he Divine goodness, *to you*, whose hearts are open to receive the truth in the love of it, *to know* and understand *the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*, which have been long concealed; *yet it is not granted to others*, who are prejudiced aga nst them, *but* they are justly suffered to continue unacquainted with them: and therefore *to them that are without*, and who are strangers, through their own neglect and folly, to what they might before have learned, *all* [*these*] *things are* now involved *in parables* and figures [h]; which, MAT. XIII. 11

[e] *An hundred fold*, &c.] Such an *increase*, even in those fruitful countries, was not very common, but however sometimes happened. See Gen. xxvi. 12.

[f] Reflect upon that instructive moral.] This solemn *proclamation* was sufficient to declare that they also were to regard the *following similies* as intended to convey some *useful instructions*, and not as mere matter of *amusement*.

[g] *His disciples.*] This is a very just *translation* of the *phrase* οι περι αυτον, which frequently is used in the best authors, for the *disciples*, or *followers* of the person it refers to; and as it thus agrees with Matthew, so we may fitly understand it of those who *attended Christ* in his progress with the *twelve apostles*. And in this way *the style* appears more natural and easy than if we read it as it stands in *our translation*, where it sounds somewhat harsh to speak of *those that were about him, when he was alone*.

[h] *All* these *things are* now involved *in parables* and figures.] Here γινεται is plainly put for εστι: I therefore render it *all things are in parables*. See Mat. vi. 16. x. 16. Mark i. 4. Luke ii. 13. xxiv. 19. John i. 6. and elsewhere.

SECT. LXV.

which, though they affect the mind of the attentive hearer and promote his edification, are disregarded by the rest and only looked upon as an empty amusement. *For to every one, who hath* any talent committed to him, and shews that he hath it by his diligent improvement of it, yet more *shall be given, and he shall have* a still greater *abundance* of means for his further improvement; *but even that which he* already *hath, shall be taken away from* the slothful creature and be withdrawn from *him* who acts like one *who hath not* any thing to improve. (Compare Luke viii. 18.) Thus wise men deal with their servants; and thus God will generally act in dispensing opportunities of a religious nature.

Mat. XIII. 12.

12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath.

13 And *therefore*, on this very principle, do *I* now *speak to them in parables*, whereas I have formerly used the plainest manner of discourse: *because seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not*[i], *neither do they understand;* inasmuch as they do not honestly use the faculties that God has given them, but are like persons that have their eyes and ears, and yet will neither see nor hear. So that it is in just displeasure that I preach to them in this obscure language, that what has been their crime may be their punishment[k]; *that seeing* my miracles, *they may see* the outward act, *but not perceive* the evidence arising from them; *and hearing* my discourses, *they may* indeed *hear* the

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables; because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand:

Mark IV. 12

MARK IV. 12. That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand: lest at any time they should be converted, and

[i] *Seeing, they see not, and hearing they hear not.*] This is justly and elegantly *paraphrased* in the *version* of 1727, in a few words; *they overlook what they see, and are inattentive to what they hear.* Yet I cannot think *the Hebraism* without some peculiar *emphasis. Our translators* have well expressed the force of it, Gen. ii. 17. Jer. iv. 10. and Zech. vi. 15.

[k] It is in just displeasure, &c.] A late learned writer has endeavoured to prove that *Christ's use of parables* was not *in displeasure*, but in tender *condescension* to their aversion to truths delivered in a less pleasing manner: but this is in effect supposing both Mark (chap. iv. 12) and Luke (chap. viii. 10) to have reported what *our Lord* says in a sense directly contrary to what he intended; for they say in so many words it was *that* the multitude *might not perceive, nor understand;* and it also makes Mat. xiii. 12. both foreign and opposite to the purpose for which it was spoken. We must therefore submit to the *difficulties* which attend this natural interpretation; which are much lessened by considering that this happened *after Christ* had upbraided and threatened the neighbouring places (from whence, doubtless, the greatest part of the multitude came), which was some time *before this sermon:* (see Mat. xi. 20—24. sect. lviii.) And it is not improbable that the *scribes* and *Pharisees*, who had so vilely *blasphemed* him *this very morning* (Mat. xii. 24. p. 320), might with an ill purpose have gathered a company of their associates and creatures about Christ to *insnare him;* which, if it were the case, will fully account for such a *reserve* —It signifies little to plead, on the other side, that *these parables* are *plain.* Their being so to us is no proof they were so to *these hearers;* and since *the apostles* themselves *did not understand* even *that of the sower*, it is no wonder if the rest were *unintelligible* to the *careless* and *captious hearer.*—Consistent with all this is what was said of the *advantages* attending *this method* to those who were *honest* and *attentive;* in the *paraphrase* on Mark iv. 2. p. 339.

[l] *Seeing*

and *their* sins should be forgiven them. [LUKE VIII.—10.]

the sound of them, *but not understand* their true intent and meaning; *lest at any time they should be converted, and* [*their*] *sins should be forgiven them*, which to many of these people they never shall. SECT. lxv. Mark IV. 12.

MAT. XIII. 14. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

And thus *in them is the prophecy of Isaiah* most exactly *fulfilled* (Isa. vi. 9, 10.) *which* indeed was originally intended to include them, and *saith*, "*By hearing you shall hear* (or you may still go on to hear with eagerness), *but you shall not understand; and seeing you shall see*, or you may still go on to see, *but you shall not perceive*[l]. Mat. XIII. 14

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

For, like a wretch who has besotted and stupified himself with riot, *the heart*, or intellectual faculty *of this people is*, as it were, *grown stiff with fatness*[m], *and they hear with heavy ears, and draw up their eyes* as if they were more than half asleep; so that one would imagine they were afraid *lest at any time they should* happen so to be roused, so as to *see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal* and save *them*. I therefore justly leave them to their own obstinacy, and direct thee, O Isaiah, to methods which I know will increase it." 15

16 But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.

But happy indeed *are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear:* you have not only greater opportunities of instruction than others, but greater integrity and seriousness in attending to them: and I congratulate you on so happy an occasion. 16

17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see,

For verily I say unto you, That many of the most holy *prophets, and* most singularly *righteous men*, under the Jewish dispensation, *have* earnestly *desired to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to*

[l] *Seeing you shall see, but you shall not perceive.*] This is a just translation of the *original*, both *here* and in Isaiah; and is another considerable argument for the *interpretation* here given of the whole *context*. —A pious and learned friend, by whose kind animadversions I have been led to insert some *additional notes* in this work, has urged several arguments to prove that this clause should be rendered, *seeing*, &c. *you WILL not perceive*. But on the maturest review of this passage, both in Isaiah and the several places where it occurs in the *New Testament*, I cannot apprehend that it was spoken merely by way of *complaint*, but think it plain that it was intended also as a *prediction*: (compare Mark iv. 12, Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26, 27. Rom. xi. 8.) Now in *predictions* we generally render the *future* form, "Such or such a thing SHALL happen," though we only mean to express the *certainty* of the event, without denying the *freedom* of the moral agents concerned in it, or detracting from it in any degree.

[m] *Grown stiff with fatness.*] This is the proper English of παχυνθη, and alludes to a notion the *ancients* had, that a great quantity of *fat* about the *heart stupified* both the intellectual and sensitive powers. Compare Deut. xxxi. 20. xxxii. 15. Psal. cxix. 70. and Isa. vi. 10.

SECT. lxv.

to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them; but only had imperfect intimations of those mysteries which are now revealed with much greater clearness to you, and will, through the Divine blessing, render you singularly useful in this world, and proportionably happy in the next. (Compare Luke x. 23, 24. sect. cvi.)

Mat. XIII. 17

see, and have not seen *them;* and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard *them.*

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. XII. 12.

LET us hear with fear and trembling these awful declarations from the lips of the compassionate *Jesus* himself. Here were crowds about *Christ,* who indulged such prejudices, and attended with such perverse dispositions, that in righteous judgment he took an *obscurer method of preaching* to them, and finally left many of them under darkness and impenitency to *die in their sins.*

Let us take heed lest the bounties of Divine providence should be thus abused by us, as a means of casting us into a *stupid insensibility* of the hand and voice of the *blessed God:* or we may otherwise have ground to fear lest he should leave us to our own *delusions,* and *give us up to the lusts of our own hearts.* And then the privilege of *ordinances,* and of the most awakening *providential dispensations* will be *vain; seeing we shall see, and not perceive; and hearing we shall hear, and not understand.*

It is our peculiar *happiness* under the *gospel* that *we see* and *hear* what *prophets* and *princes* and *saints of old, desired to see and hear,* but were not favoured with it. Let us be thankful for our privilege, and improve it well; lest a *neglected gospel* by the righteous judgment of God be *taken away* and our *abused seasons of grace,* by one method of Divine displeasure or other, be brought to a speedy *period.* But if by grace *it is given to us to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,* let us learn a thankfulness in some measure proportionable to the corrupt *prejudices* which have been overborne, and the important *blessings* which are secured to us.

SECT. LXVI.

Our Lord explains the parable of the sower, and exhorts his disciples to a diligent improvement of their knowledge and gifts. Mark IV. 13—25. Mat. XIII. 18—23. Luke VIII. 11—18.

MARK IV. 13.

SECT. lxvi.

AND when the twelve apostles, in a retired place (as we observed above, Mark iv. 10. p. 341), asked Jesus the meaning of the parable of the sower which he had delivered to the multitude

Mark IV. 13.

MARK IV. 13.

AND he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how

how then will ye know all parables?

titude as he sat in the ship, *he said unto them,* SECT. lxi.
Know ye not the meaning of *this* easy and familiar *parable*, so nearly referring to the prophetic language? (see Jer iv. 3. and Hos. x. 12.) Mark IV. 13.
How then will you understand all the other *parables* that I have spoken, some of which are much harder than this?

MAT. XIII. 18. Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

I shall however yield to your request, and shew myself on all occasions ready to instruct you: *hear ye therefore*, according to your desire, the explication of *the parable of the sower.* Mat. XIII. 18

LUKE VIII. 11. Now the parable is this: The seed [*which* the sower soweth] is the word of God. [MARK IV. 14.]

Now the meaning of *the parable is this.* It is intended to represent the different success of the gospel in the world; for *the seed* [*which*] *the sower* I spoke of *soweth, is the word of God*, which I am employed to preach, and which will ere long also be committed to you: but too much of our labour will be lost on three bad kinds of hearers, whom I described in the parable by different kinds of unfruitful ground. Luke VIII. 11

MARK IV. 15. And these are they by the way-side; where the word is sown, but [when any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then] Satan [the wicked one] cometh immediately, and taketh away the word [which was sown in his heart, [LUKE, lest they should believe, and be saved:] this is he which received seed by the way-side. [MAT. XIII. 19. LUKE VIII. 12.]

And, in the first place, *these are they* whom I described as receiving the seed *by the way-side, where the word is* no sooner *sown, but* the effect of it is presently lost, and their true character may thus be represented to you: *when any one hears of the word of the* heavenly *kingdom*, or of the gospel of the grace of God, *and* through a careless inattention *understands* [*it*] *not; then Satan, that wicked one*, who is the great enemy of God and souls, flying as eagerly as a bird to his prey, *comes immediately, and catches away the word that was sown in his heart, lest they* who have heard it *should believe, and be saved*; and as nothing is like to be long remembered which is not well understood, all trace of it is quickly lost out of such a mind, as grain scattered in the road: *this*, I say, *is he, that received the seed by the way-side* in the parable. Mark IV. 15

16 And these are they likewise which [received the seed] on stony ground, [LUKE, on the rock;] who when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [MAT. XIII. 20. LUKE VIII. 13.—]

And in like manner, in the next place, *these are they who* were described as having *received the seed in stony soil*, or *on a rock* under a very shallow bed of earth: such, I mean, *who having heard* the message of pardon, life and glory, which *the word* of the gospel brings, *immediately receive it with* a transport of *joy*, and feel their natural passions elevated and enlarged at the report of such agreeable news; *But* as they *have no root* of deep conviction and real love to holiness *in themselves*, they have no true impression of the power of it on their hearts, *and so believe* 16

17 And have no root in themselves, and so [LUKE, believe, *and*] endure but for a time; afterward 17

SECT. lxvi.

it only in a notional, not a vital manner, [*and*] *endure* in the profession of it *but for a* little *while;* [*and*] *afterwards in a time of* sharp *trial,* especially *when* any domestic *oppression or* public *persecution arises on account of the word, they are presently offended,* [*and*] *apostatize* from that warm and eager profession which in times of less difficulty they were so forward to make.

afterward [LUKE, in time of temptation,] when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended, [LUKE, *and* fall away.] MAT. XIII. 21. LUKE VIII. 13.

Mark IV. 17.

18, 19 *And,* in the third place, *these are they,* whom I described by telling you, *that* they *received seed among thorns:* even *such as hear the word,* perhaps with great constancy and the appearance of serious attention; [*but*] almost *as soon as they have heard* [*it*] *go out* of the assembly, *and,* immerging themselves in secular affairs, permit *the cares of this world, and the* artful *delusion of riches*[a], *or* perhaps *the pleasures of* [*this*] animal *life, or the desires of* some *other things,* which equally tend to alienate the soul from God, to *enter* [*into their minds*] *and* take up all their thoughts and time to such a degree as to *choke the word, and* so *it becomes unfruitful:* [*yea,*] *they* themselves *are choked,* as it were, with these fatal incumbrances[b], *and* whatever purposes or faint efforts they may make towards a partial reformation, they *bring no fruit to perfection,* but remain destitute of every degree of genuine and prevailing piety.

18, 19 And these are they which [received seed] among thorns; such as hear the word, [LUKE, *and* when they have heard, go forth,] and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, [LUKE, and pleasures of *this* life,] and the lusts of other things, entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful; [LUKE, *yea,* they are choked, and bring no fruit to perfection.]—[MAT. XIII. 22. LUKE VIII. 14.]

20 *And* once more, *these are they, who* were said to have *received the seed into good ground:* even *such as* do not only *hear the word* with attention *and* simplicity of mind, but *understand* what is spoken *and receive* it without prejudice and opposition; *and* when they depart, are solicitous to *retain* [*it*] *in an honest and good heart, bringing forth* the good *fruit* of substantial holiness, in various degrees, *with patience* and perseverance, *some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold,*

20 And these are they which [received seed into] good ground; such as hear the word, [and understand,] and receive, [LUKE, *and* keep *it* in an honest and good heart,] and bring forth fruit [LUKE, with patience], some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some an hundred. [MAT. XIII. 23.—LUKE VIII. 15.]

[a] *The* artful *delusion of riches.*] This phrase, απατη του πλουτου, is very elegant, and admirably expresses the *various artifices* by which people in the pursuit of *riches* excuse themselves from day to day in putting off *religious cares,* and the confounding *disappointment,* which often mingles itself with their *labours,* and even with their *success.* Compare Prov. xi. 28. Luke xviii. 24. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, 17. 2 Tim. ii. 4. and iv. 10.

[b] *They* themselves *are choked,* &c.] So Luke expresses it, perhaps to intimate the uneasy situation of the mind while clogged and straitened with such incumbrances as these, and rendered, as it were, unfit to breathe its own native air, and to delight itself with celestial and eternal objects.—*Choking* arises from any thing which straitens the gullet, or wind-pipe, and so obstructs the passage of food or air. And thus *young plants* or *corn,* may properly be said to be *choked by thorns,* which do not leave them room to grow; and *the word,* which would exert its vital power and principle, is represented as *choked* when thus pressed with secular cares prevailing in the mind.

fold, both to their present joy and to their future glory. SECT. lxvi.

21 And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? *and* not to be set on a candlestick?

And he said farther *to them*, I appeal to yourselves, and urge it as a proper consideration to engage you to communicate the light you have to others, *Is a lamp brought* into a room, *to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? [and] not to be set on a stand?* You know it is not. For *no man* of common sense will even waste a few drops of oil so: nor is there any one that, *having lighted a lamp, covers it with a vessel, or puts it under a couch*[c]; *but sets it upon a stand* in a conspicuous place, *that* all *they who enter in* to the house *may see the light* of it, and guide their motions by it: (compare Mat. v. 15. p. 204, and Luke xi. 33, p. 335.) And can you think it is fit that you should waste the precious oil of my instructions, which I am pouring into your minds, to render you the lamps of my sanctuary? Be not then backward, as occasion offers, to communicate to others what you receive from me; *for nothing is* now said in *secret* among us, *which shall not be revealed; nor* any thing *hid, which shall not be made known and published*[d]; as we are carrying on no works or counsels of darkness among us, but concerting measures for the public instruction and reformation of mankind.

Mark IV. 21.

Luke VIII. 16.

Luke VIII. 16. No man when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth *it* under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.—[Mark IV. 22.]

17

Mark IV. 23. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

If any man therefore *hath ears to hear, let him hear*; and if you have intelligent powers, let it be your peculiar care to exert them to this important purpose.

Mark IV. 23.

24 And he said unto them, Take heed [therefore] what [*and* how]

And he said also *to them*, Do you above all *take heed therefore*, and carefully attend to *what* you

24

[c] *Covers it with a vessel, or puts it under a couch.*] Mark expresses it as a *question*, and Luke as a direct *negation*. I have given it in *both the forms*, as what seemed most effectually to secure the credit of *both the evangelists*: and I humbly submit it to better judgments, whether, in some of these instances, Christ might not immediately *repeat the thought* a second time in nearly the same words, in order to fix some very memorable passage on the minds of his hearers, who to be sure needed *line upon line, and precept upon precept*. In this view he will appear, if less like a polite *orator*, yet more like a *father* instructing his children; and perhaps if more of this familiar and condescending method was practised in *our sermons*, though the delicacy of a few might be less amused, the souls of the people might be more edified; and consequently the end of *Christian ordinances* (which is by no means the *applause* of those who administer them), might be more effectually answered.

[d] *Nor* any thing *hid, which shall not be made known and published.*] Though a prospect of the *final discovery* of the great day would contain a strong argument, both in compassion to others, and from a prudent regard to their own happiness, to engage his disciples to make a *faithful report* of the *gospel* committed to their trust; yet I think the words will contain an important sense, without supposing them to refer to *that*. Compare Mat. x. 26, 27, sect. lxxv. and Luke xii. 2, 3, sect. cxi. in which two places *the same words* seem, as often elsewhere, to have a different sense.

[e] *To*

SECT. lxvi.

you hear from me, [*and*] *how you hear* it: for in this sense I may say, as formerly on another occasion, (Mat. vii. 2, p. 231, and Luke vi. 38, p. 289), *The measure with which you mete* to others, *shall be used to you; and to you that* attentively *hear, more shall be given*[e], and those who are most diligent in teaching others shall

25 be taught most themselves. *For*, as I said before in this discourse, (Mat. xiii. 12, p. 342,) *to him that* improves what he *hath*, more *shall be given; but from him that* acts as one who *hath not*, from him *shall be taken away even that which* for the present *he hath*, [*or*] *seemeth to have*[f]: but which he shall soon find was not accurately speaking, his own, and must be strictly accounted for to the real proprietor.)

Mark iv. 24.

how] you hear: With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear, shall more be given. [Luke VIII. 18.—]

25 For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath [*or* seemeth to have.] [Luke VIII.—18.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Luke viii. 18.

Let us apply to ourselves *this charge* of our *blessed Redeemer*, and *take heed how we hear*. Especially let us be very careful that we *despise not him* that *now speaks to us from heaven*; and remember the *authority*, which his *exaltation there* gives to the *words* which he spake in the *days of his flesh*.

Mat. xiii. 18 *& seq.*

Let us attentively *hear* the *parable of the sower* and its *interpretation*. Still is *Christ* by his *word* and *ministers*, *sowing* among

Ver. 19

us *the good seed*. Still is the great *enemy of souls* labouring to

Mark iv. 20

snatch it away. Let us endeavour to *understand*, that we may *retain* it; and to *retain*, that we may *practise* it. Still do *the cares*

Ver. 18

of this world press us; still do its *pleasures* solicit us; still do *our lusts war in our members*; and all unite their efforts to prevent our *fruitfulness in good works*: but let us remember, that with *having our fruit unto holiness, everlasting life* is connected as *the end*; and that *in due season we shall reap, if we faint not*. (Rom. vi. 22, and Gal. vi. 9.)

17 Let us therefore be concerned that the *seed* may take *deep root* in our minds, that we may not rest in any superficial impression on the *passions*; but, feeling the energy of that *living principle*, may *flourish* under the circumstances which *wither* others, and may

e *To you that hear, more shall be given.*] I know there may be some room to doubt whether these *three verses in Mark*, at the close of *this section*, were spoken to *the disciples* apart, or to the *multitude*; but I think *these words* make the former much more probable.

f *Seemeth to have.*] I know δοκει εχειν, *seemeth to have*, is sometimes a *pleonasm*, which signifies *to have*; yet the *paraphrase* shews it is not necessarily so here, which is also favoured by Luke xvi. 12, sect. cxxiv. (See also 1 Cor. iii. 18. Gal. vi. 3. and James i. 26.) However, as I confess it may possibly be a *pleonasm*, if any chuse to take it thus, then the *last clause*, which is included in a *parenthesis*, must be left out.

due time be gathered as God's *wheat into his garner.* Nor epine if we now *go forth weeping, bearing* this *precious* hile we have such a hope of *coming again rejoicing, bring-sheaves with us.* (Psal. cxxvi. 6.)

SECT. LXVI.

SECT. LXVII.

rd delivers the parable of the tares in the field; and after-s explains it at large to his disciples. Mat. XIII. 24—30, 43.

XIII. 24.
ER parable
e forth unto
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vants

MAT. XIII. 24.

SECT. LXVII.

Mat. XIII. 24

NOW to return to the story of our Lord's teaching the multitude from the ship: *he* likewise at the same time *proposed another parable to them,* to intimate that persons of various characters should come into the gospel-profession; but that there should be a final separation between them in the other world, however they might be blended together in this. And he taught them, *saying, the kingdom of heaven*[a], or the success of the gospel dispensation, *may be compared* to that which happened *to a man*[b] *who had sown good seed in his ground: But* one night, *while the men* who were set to watch it *slept,* an ill-natured neighbour, who was *his enemy,* with a malicious view to spoil the crop, *came and sowed* a quantity of *tares among the wheat,* which had just been thrown into the ground, *and went away* without being discovered. *But* afterwards, *when the blade was sprung up, and produced fruit, then the tares also appeared* among the ears of wheat in a manner easily to be distinguished. *And the servants of the proprietor of the estate*[c] *came* in a surprise, *and said to him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed* of pure wheat *in thy field? whence then hath it* these *tares,* which now appear mingled with the crop? *And he said unto them, Some* ill-natured and *malicious person* in the neighbourhood *has* undoubtedly *done this,* taking advantage of your absence or negligence. *And the servants,* willing to make

25 26 27 28

[a] *kingdom of heaven.*] That this is tly to be understood of the *gospel tion* has been observed before in n Mat. iii. 2, p. 96.

[b] *y be compared* to that which hap-o *a man.*] Or may be *illustrated* by owing *similitude.* See *note* [i] on Luke p. 307.

[c] *The proprietor of the estate.*] So οἰκοδεσπότης seems to signify in this connection. He is supposed to be *the master of the field,* and of some *lodge,* or *farm-house,* in which these *servants* dwelt.

SECT. lxvii.

make the best amends they could, *said to him*, *Wilt thou then have us go* directly to root them out, *and gather them up* before they get any farther head? *But he said*, *No*, I do not think that proper; *lest while you* endeavour to *gather up the tares, you should*, before you are aware,

Mat. XIII. 29.

30 *root up* some of *the wheat* also *with them:* It will be better to *permit both to grow together till the harvest* come; *and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles, that they may* afterwards *be burnt* for fuel[d]; *but gather ye the wheat into my barn*, that it may there be ready for my use.

36 *Then Jesus*, after he had spoken some other parables[e], *having dismissed the multitude, went* from the vessel where he had been preaching *into an house*, to refresh himself a little before he crossed the lake[f]: *and his disciples* who constantly attended him, *came to him, saying*, We desire thou wouldest *explain to us the parable of the tares in the field*, for we do not perfectly understand it.

37 *And he answered and said unto them, He*, in the parable, *that sowed the good seed, is* intended to represent *the Son of man*, the great preacher of the gospel, which is ordained as the most illustrious instrument for the reformation and happiness of mankind.

38 *The field is* indeed *the* whole *world*, in which the gospel is to be preached, and not to be confined to the Jewish nation alone: *the good seed are the children of the kingdom*, or those truly pious men who, being formed on the model of the gospel, and as it were assimilated to it, are the heirs of future glory, as well as entitled to the present privileges of my church: but, on the other hand, *the tares are* wicked men, who are indeed *the children of the wicked one*, though many of them may profess themselves my disciples, and for their own unworthy

vants said unto Wilt thou then t go and gather the

29 But he said, lest while ye gat the tares, ye r also the wheat them:

30 Let both together until th vest: and in th of harvest I w to the reapers, G ye together fir tares, and bind in bundles to them; but gath wheat into my b

36 Then Jesu the multitude and went int house: and hi ciples came unt saying, Declar us the parable tares of the field

37 He answer said unto them that soweth the seed, is the S man:

38 The field world: the goo are the children kingdom: but th are the children wicked one:

d *May* afterwards *be burnt* for fuel.] This plainly proves that the word ζιζανια, which we render *tares*, does not exactly answer to *that vegetable* among us, which is a kind of *pulse* too good to be used merely for *fuel*.

e After he had spoken some other parables.] Some of these are contained in the intermediate verses (ver. 31—35); but I apprehend the *explication of the parable* would appear with some peculiar advantage thus immediately after it.

f A little before he crossed the I am sensible that Mark iv. 36, may some *objection* to this; but the reade see in my *paraphrase* there, sect. lxi I apprehend it may be reconciled w interpretation and order of the story I acknowledge it possible that *the hou* spoken of might be on the *other side lake*, and that they might go into *next day*.

worthy ends pretend a great zeal for my cause and church. *The enemy that sowed them is the devil*, who studies by all means to corrupt men's principles and debauch their lives, and puts those on a hypocritical profession of religion who are utter strangers to its power. *The harvest* I mentioned *is the end of the world*, the great day of judgment and retribution; *and the reapers are the angels*, who are to be employed in the services of that day. *As therefore the tares* in the parable *are* ordered by the owner of the field to be *gathered together, and burnt in the fire; so* likewise *shall it be at the end of this world. The Son of man shall* then *send forth his* attendant *angels*[g], *and they*, in obedience to his command, *shall gather out of his kingdom all things which have been an offence* to others, *even* all *those that practise iniquity*, and thereby bring a reproach on their profession, and lay stumbling-blocks in the way of others: *And* these blessed spirits, as the executioners of the divine vengeance, *shall cast them into* hell, *the furnace of* unquenchable *fire:* and dreadful indeed will their condition be; for *there shall be lamentation, and gnashing of teeth* for ever[h], in the height of anguish, rage, and despair; a despair, aggravated by all the privileges they once enjoyed, and the vain hope which, as my professed disciples, they once entertained. But *then shall the righteous* be publicly owned and honoured, and with a joyful welcome be received into the heavenly world, where they shall *shine forth* with divine radiancy and glory, *like the sun* itself, and be fixed for ever *in the kingdom of their Father*, to enjoy the transforming visions of his face.

This misery, or this felicity, is the end of all the living; nor can I ever declare a truth of greater importance to you. See to it therefore, that you regard it with becoming attention; and *every one who hath ears to hear, let him hear* it, and govern his life by its extensive influence.

SECT. lxvii.

Mat. XIII. 39

39 The enemy that sowed them, is the devil: the harvest is the end of the world: and the reapers are the angels.

40 As therefore the tares are gathered, and burnt in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world.

41 The son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

IMPROVE-

[g] *Shall send forth his* attendant *angels.*] The reader will observe how high an idea *our Lord* here gives of himself, when he speaks of *the angels* as his *attendants*, who were at the last day to *wait on him*, and at *his order* to assemble the whole world before him.

[h] *Gnashing of teeth.*] Since what is here spoken of is supposed to pass *in a furnace of fire*, it is strange that any should have imagined that ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων signifies the *knocking*, or, as we commonly express it, the *chattering of the teeth*, through excess of cold. Yet some have been weak enough to argue from hence that (according to the *Mahometan* notion) the alternative extremities of *heat* and *cold* should constitute the *torment of the damned*. See *Archbishop Dawes's Sermons on Hell*, serm. iii. p. 14.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. lxvii. OH that these important instructions might, as it were, be ever sounding in our ears! It is matter of great *thankfulness* that *this earth*, which might have been abandoned by God as a *barren wilderness*, is cultivated as *his field*, and that any *good seed* is to be found in it; but *grievous* to think how many *tares* are intermingled, so as almost to over-run the ground, and hide *the wheat* from being seen. Let not a *forward zeal* prompt us, like these over-officious *servants*, to think of *rooting them out* by violence; but let us *wait our master's time* and be patient till *the day of the Lord.*

Mat. XIII. 38, 27, 29

41 The *separation* will at length be made; nor shall *one precious grain* perish. Awful important time! when *the angels* shall perform their great office with a *sagacity* too sharp to be eluded, and a *power* too strong to be resisted! *Gather not our souls, O Lord, with sinners!* but may they be *bound up in the bundle of life!* that when *the day cometh, which shall burn as an oven*, and when *the* 42 *wicked like chaff* shall be thrown in *to be consumed*, we may survey the *execution* of the *Divine judgment* with awful triumph; being owned by God as *his* while he is *making up his jewels, and spared by him as his obedient children.* (Mal. iii. 17, and iv. 1.) Then 43 shall we not only be *spared*, but *honoured* and adorned, and *shine forth like the sun in our father's kingdom*; for these *vile bodies shall be fashioned like to the glorious body of our Redeemer* (Phil. iii. 21), and our purified and perfected *spirits* shall be clothed with proportionable *lustre*, and reflect the complete *image of his* holiness. Amen.

SECT. LXVIII.

Our Lord adds other parables relating to the speedy progress of the gospel and the importance of the blessings it proposes. Mark IV. 26—34. Mat. XIII. 31—35, 44—53.

MARK IV. 26.

SECT. lxviii. *AND* after Jesus had delivered the foregoing parable, *he* went on with his discourse to the multitude, and farther *said, So is the kingdom of God*, and such the nature of the dispensation of the gospel in its progress, that it is like the growth of vegetables, and may fitly be illustrated by the case of a husbandman: for it is *as if a* 27 *man should throw* his *seed upon the earth; And* after it is sown, *should* take no farther thought about it, but *sleep by night, and rise by day*, and apply himself to other business; *and* in the mean time

Mark IV. 26

MARK IV. 26.

AND he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground,

27 And should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

time, without his thought and care, *the seed should spring up and increase he knows not how.* SECT. LXVIII.

28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

For the earth, by a certain curious kind of mechanism, which the greatest philosophers cannot fully comprehend[a], does, as it were, *spontaneously*, without any assistance from man, carry it through the whole progress of vegetation; and *produces first the blade, then the ear*, and *afterward the full grain in the ear.* Mark IV. 28

29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

But at the proper season for it, *as soon as the fruit is ripe, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest is come;* and all that remains is to receive the bountiful provision which the great Lord of all has produced by his own power. By such insensible degrees shall the gospel gain ground in the world, and ripen to a harvest of glory: and therefore let not my faithful servants be discouraged if the effect of their labours be not immediately so conspicuous as they could desire[b]; a future crop may spring up, and the Son of man will in due time appear to gather it in. 29

30 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

And he made a pause in his discourse, and then *said*, I am thinking, *whereunto shall we compare the kingdom of God? or with what parable shall we* place it in such a point of light as farther to *illustrate it.* 30

MAT. XIII. 31. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying,

After which reflection, *he proposed another parable to them, saying, The kingdom of heaven*, of which I am speaking, or the interest of the gospel in the world, *is like a grain of mustard seed, which* Mat. xiii. 31.

[a] By a curious kind of mechanism, &c.] The word αὐτομάτη, which is generally in good authors applied to *artificial machines*, so naturally suggested this thought, that I could not forbear hinting at it. The reader may see a very elegant illustration of it in Dr. *Watts's Philosophical Essays.* No. ix. § 2.

[b] Let not my faithful servants be discouraged, &c.] It cannot be the design of *this parable* to encourage private *Christians* to imagine that religion will flourish in their own souls without proper cultivation; nor to lead *ministers* to expect that it will flourish in their people while they neglect due application in private as well as public. I hope therefore the reader will acquiesce with me in the *paraphrase* given above; supposing that *our Lord* meant to intimate that *his apostles* and other *ministers* were not to estimate their usefulness merely by their immediate and visible success; but might hope that by their preaching a seed would be left in the hearts of many which might afterwards produce happy fruit. On these principles, I doubt not but *our Lord's preaching* greatly promoted the signal success of the *apostles* (to which he might in part refer, John iv. 38, p. 170), and I hope the remark may sometimes be applicable to *our labours*, especially with respect to those who, have enjoyed a religious education, and being restrained from grosser irregularities, have not been so *far* as others *from the kingdom of God.* There can be no reason to interpret this (as Grotius and Dr. Clarke have done) of Christ only: he does not *go away and sleep*; and he perfectly *knows how the seed springs up:* on the other hand every faithful *minister* may be said to *put in his sickle*, as having his part in the final *harvest.* (See John iv. 36, p. 169.)

SECT. lxviii.

which a man took and sowed in his field to raise and propagate the plant: It is, I say, like this grain, *which indeed, when* at first *it is sown in the earth, is* very small and inconsiderable, and [*one of*] *the least of all the seeds, that are* cast *in the* 32 *ground*[c]: *But when it is sown* some time in the earth, *it grows up* to a surprising degree, *and becomes greater than all* other *herbs; yea,* I may even say, *it becomes a tree, and shoots out great branches, so* large and thick, *that the birds of the air may* build their nests in it, and *come and lodge in its branches*[d], [*and*] harbour *under its shadow.* In such a remarkable manner did our Lord intimate, that his gospel should prevail amidst all opposition; and, inconsiderable as its beginnings were, should spread itself abroad through the whole world, so as to afford weary and fearful souls a grateful and secure retreat.

Mark IV. 31.

Mark IV. 32.

saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; [MARK IV. 31.—]

MARK IV. —31. Which [indeed] when it is sown in the earth, is [the least of all seeds] that be in the earth: [MAT. XIII. 32.—]

32 But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs; [and becometh a tree,] and shooteth out great branches, so that the fowls of the air may [come and lodge in the branches, *and*] under the shadow of it. [MAT. XIII.—32.

He also *spake another parable to them,* to the same purpose with the former, which, like the rest, was taken from a very familiar circumstance daily occurring in life: *The kingdom of heaven,* said he, or the cause of the gospel, *is like* a little *leaven, which a woman took and covered up in three measures of meal;* and though it seemed lost for a while in the mass of dough, it secretly wrought through it by a speedy though insensible fermentation *till* at length *the whole was leavened.* Thus shall the gospel spread in the world, and influence and assimilate the temper and conduct of men.

MAT. XIII. 33. Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

34 *All these things Jesus spake to the multitude in parables; and with many* other *such parables spake he the word unto them as they were able to hear* and receive [*it;*] well knowing that so many enemies were then hovering round him, that, had he declared the mysteries of his kingdom in plainer terms, he would have been in continual danger, and must, without a series of repeated miracles, have been cut off by their malice: *and* upon this account, *without a parable he spake not* any thing in all that he delivered *to them* on that day;

34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; [and with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear *it;*] and without a parable spake he not unto them: [MARK IV. 33, 34.—]

c *The least of all the seeds,* &c.] Or *one of the least;* and so small that it was *proverbially* used to signify *a very little thing.* (Compare Mat. xvii. 20, sect. xci.) See *Lightfoot's Hor. Heb.* on Mat. xiii. 32.

d *Come and lodge in its branches.*] The *Talmud* mentions a *mustard-tree* so large that a man might with ease sit in it; and another, one of whose branches covered a tent: (see *Tremell. Not. in loc.* and *Lightfoot's Hor. Heb.*) And it is certain we shall be much mistaken if we judge of *vegetables* or *animals* in the *eastern* and *southern* countries, merely by what those of the same species are among us. See *Raphel. Annotat. ex Herodoto.* p. 163.

e *That*

35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

day; *That so it might be* seen that passage was remarkably *fulfilled* in him[e], *which was spoken by the prophet* (Psal. lxxviii. 2), and that he might with the utmost propriety adopt those words that Asaph had delivered, *saying*, "*I will open* "*my mouth in parables, I will give vent to* dark "sayings of old, even to *things* which have "been *hid from the foundation of the world.*" For thus did Jesus teach important truths that were before unknown, in manner something obscure, though to the attentive mind peculiarly impressing.

SECT. lxviii. Mat. XIII. 35

Mark IV.—34. And when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

And after he had sent away the multitude, and was retired from them, *he* freely *expounded all these things to his disciples when they were alone* with him.

Mark IV. 34.

Mat. XIII. 44. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

And when he had given them the forementioned explication of the parable of the tares, he *again* added some other parables to the same purpose, to promote the diligence, zeal and resolution of his disciples, in searching into and teaching these great and important truths, in which the glory of God and the salvation of souls were so much concerned. Particularly, he said to them, The happiness to which *the kingdom of heaven*, or the gospel-dispensation, is designed to conduct men, *is like* an immense *treasure hid in a field, which when a man has found, he hides* and covers up again with all possible care; *and*, in the transport he is in *for joy of it, goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field* at any rate, as being sure that it will abundantly answer the price.

Mat. XIII. 44

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man, seeking goodly pearls;

Or *again*, to represent the matter in a like instance, that I may fix it yet more deeply on your minds[f], *The kingdom of heaven is* in this respect *like*, or may be illustrated by the similitude of *a merchant*, who goes about from one country to another, *seeking* the largest and most *beautiful pearls*[g], and other fine jewels; *Who finding one*

45

46 Who when he had

[e] *That it might be fulfilled.*] So many *scriptures* are thus quoted by way of *allusion*, that I cannot think it necessary to suppose, as some late ingenious writers have done, that *these words* did not originally belong to the *seventy-eighth Psalm*, but are a *fragment* of some other, describing the manner in which the *Messiah* was to preach. See *Jeffreys's Review*, p. 117.) They have a plain connection with the *following verses*, and might, perhaps, be a kind of preface to all *Asaph's psalms*, in which there are some *dark sayings*, though the greatest part of the *seventy-eighth* is very clear.

[f] Fix it yet more deeply on your minds.] Considering the many trials they were shortly to expect, it was proper the thought should thus be inculcated upon them by a variety of *figures*.

[g] *Beautiful pearls.*] The sacred writers elsewhere compare and prefer *wisdom* to *jewels*. See Job xxviii. 15—19; Prov. iii. 15: and viii. 11.

But

SECT. lxviii.

one pearl of an exceeding great value, offered to him on very advantageous terms, would by no means slip the opportunity, but presently *went away, and sold all that he had, and bought it*; as well knowing he should be a considerable gainer, though he should part with all he was possessed of for it. Thus, though a resolute profession of my gospel may indeed cost you dear, yet it will, on the whole, be infinitely for your advantage and richly repay all your losses.

had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Mat. XIII. 46.

47 But see to it, that you are in good earnest in your religion, and do not impose upon yourselves by an empty profession: for, to add one parable more, which I shall *again* borrow from an object with which some of you have been very conversant: The success of *the kingdom of heaven* in the world *is like* that of *a net thrown into the sea, which gathered* in [*fishes*] *of all sorts;*

47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind;

48 *Which, when* the fishermen perceived that *it was full, they dragged to the shore, and sitting down* there, to survey the draught that they had made, *gathered the good into* proper *vessels, but threw*

49 *away the bad*[h], as not worth their regard. So mixed and undistinguished here are the characters of those who profess the gospel, which, as it is preached promiscuously to all, gathers in persons of all sorts, and hypocrites as well as true believers are brought into the visible church. But an exact survey will finally be taken of the whole; and *so it will be* shewn at last how great a difference there is between them by the assignment of their state: for *at the end of the world the angels shall come forth* in the general resurrection *and separate the wicked from among the just*, with whom they often have been joined before, even in the same religious society and in the participation of the same external privileges;

48 Which when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just;

50 *And* they *shall cast them into a furnace of fire*, the seat of the damned; where their torments shall never end, but *there shall be* incessant *wailing, and gnashing of teeth*, for rage and despair.

50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

51 Then *Jesus saith unto them, Have ye*, with the key to them which I before gave you, *understood all these things? They say unto him, Yes, Lord*, we clearly understand them. *And he said*

51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

h *But threw away the bad.*] The word σαπρα, which we render *bad*, generally signifies *corrupt* or *putrid*, and seems an allusion to the drawing up some *dead fish* in a net with the living. Mr. Horberry justly observes that this in the strongest terms represents the hopeless state of sinners at last. See his *Discourse of future punishment*, p. 39.

52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an housholder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

said to them. See *therefore*, that as you understand them, you make a good use of them, for your own advantage, and that of others: for *every scribe who is disciplined* in the mysteries and has attained *to* the knowledge of *the kingdom of heaven*, or every faithful minister who is fit for his work, *is like a housekeeper, who* lays in a variety of goods for use, and keeps them in such order, that he readily *brings forth out of his store things new and old*, as the several occasions of life require, dispensing them in such a manner as may best suit the case of those who are under his care. SECT. lxviii. Mat. XIII. 52.

53 And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, which he added to those he had spoken in public, *he departed thence* that evening, to shun the farther importunity of the people, and crossed the sea with some remarkable circumstances, which will be mentioned below. 53

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us be concerned to *gather up these fragments, that nothing may be lost*; and to lay them up in our memories and our hearts, that, according to our respective stations in life, we may have them *ready for use*. Mat. XIII. 52.

Let us remember that sometimes the *growth of piety* in the heart *is like* that of *vegetables in the earth*. The *seed of the word* may for a while *seem lost*; or when the *fruit* appears, it may advance and ripen but *slowly*. Let not *ministers* therefore too confidently conclude they have *laboured in vain, and spent their strength for nought*, because the *fields* are not immediately *white to the harvest*, but with believing hope and humble patience let them recommend *the seed that they have sown* to Him, who by the secret energy of his continued influences, can give at length a sure and plentiful *increase*. Mark IV. 26—29.

When *Jesus took to himself his great power, and reigned*, the *gospel*, which had gained so little ground under his *personal* ministration, *ran, and was* greatly *glorified* in the hands of the *apostles*. The *grain of mustard seed* shot up and branched forth into a *spreading tree*, and *birds* of every wing took shelter there; (Oh that there had been none of the *ravenous* and the *obscene kind!* Thus when *the* Lord shall please *to hasten it in his time, a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation*, (Isa. lx. 22.) Mat. XIII. 31, 32.

Let us pray that the triumphant *progress* of his *kingdom may come*. In the mean time let it be our desire that the *principles of* 33

SECT. LXVIII.

Ver. 44—46.

the gospel may, like a sacred kind of *leaven*, diffuse themselves through our whole souls; that all our powers and faculties, that all our thoughts and passions, may be, as it were, impregnated and elevated by them. Let us remember the *value* of the blessings it proposes; and regarding *Christ* as the *pearl of great price*, and *heaven* as that immense *treasure* in which alone we can be for ever rich and happy, let us be willing to *part with all* to secure it, if we are called to such a trial.

47—50. It is not enough that we are *nominal Christians*, or possessed of the common privileges of the church: the *day* of final *separation* will come, and the *angels* employed in the work will not overlook us, but conduct us to the abodes of the *righteous* or the *wicked*. Oh that we may not then be *cast* with abhorrence *into the furnace of fire!* but now seriously realizing to ourselves this awful *day*, of which *our Lord* has given such repeated prospects, may we so *judge ourselves* that we may not then be *condemned* of him!

SECT. LXIX.

Our Lord, having given some remarkable answers to some who seemed disposed to follow him, passes over the lake, and stills a mighty tempest, as he was crossing it. Mat. VIII. 18—27. Mark IV. 35, *to the end.* Luke VIII. 22—25. IX. 57, *to the end.*

MARK IV. 35.

SECT. LXIX.

Mark IV. 35.

NOW *in the evening of the same day*[a] on which the parables that we have been relating were delivered, *when Jesus saw great multitudes* still waiting *about him*[b], purposing for a little while to retire from them, *he* came out of the house

MARK IV. 35.

AND the same day when the even was come, [when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, [LUKE he went into a ship with his disciples; and he

a *In the evening of the same day,*] Or, *that very day, when it was evening:* for these are the express words of the *evangelist;* εν εκεινη τη ημερα, οψιας γενομενης: and indeed they are so *express*, that I am amazed any *critics*, who do not suppose he was mistaken, can pretend it was not *the same day;* which yet Dr. Clarke does, as if the phrase meant nothing more than *one day towards evening.* I dare not take so great a freedom with the *sacred author*, and have therefore been obliged to *transpose*, though not to contradict, Matthew.—This indeed appears one of the busiest days of *Christ's life*, as all the events and discourses recorded from his miraculous cure of the *demoniack* who was *blind* and *dumb* (sect. lxi. p. 320) happened in it; nevertheless, I see no absurdity in supposing that all these things might pass in less than *twelve hours.* Compare *note* c on Mat. xii. 22. p. 320.

b *Great multitudes* still waiting *about him.*] They sometimes staid with or near him *several days* together: (compare Mat. xv. 32. sect. lxxxvi.) And it seems that *now* they staid a while *after Christ had dismissed them*, perhaps with a prayer or benediction (Mat. xiii. 36, p. 350.) for, on his coming down again to the shore, the *disciples* joined with him in persuading them to disperse; which, when they saw him determined to *cross the sea*, they would the more readily do: for so we may conclude from what Mark says above, ver. 36. that just as he took shipping, *they* (that is, *Jesus* and *his disciples*) *sent them away.* And this appears to me to be the easiest way to reconcile this difference, which is none of the least.

c *They*

SECT. lxix.

he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake.] [MAT. VIII. 18.—LUKE VIII. 22.—]

house, and *went into a ship*, which stood by the neighbouring shore, *with* those of *his disciples* with whom he had just been discoursing; *and said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake.* Mark IV. 35.

36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship.

And when they had dismissed the multitude, and had at length persuaded them to withdraw, *they took him* just *as he was in the ship*[c], without any farther provision for their passage. 36

But before we relate the particulars of their voyage, we shall here take occasion to add two or three little occurrences, one of which happened at this time.

MAT. VIII. 19. And [it came to pass, that as they went in the way,] a certain scribe came, and said unto him, [Lord *and*] Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. [LUKE IX. 57.]

And first *it came to pass, that as they went in the way*[d] from the house out of which he came, to the shore were he proposed to embark, *a certain scribe*, pleased with his entertaining parables, and concluding from the tenor of some of them[e], as well as from the zeal with which the people flocked about him, that he would soon become a mighty prince, on declaring himself the Messiah, *came* with all the appearance of profound respect *and said unto him*, O thou great *Lord* [*and*] *Master*, who hast another kind of authority than we scribes can pretend to (Mat. vii. 29, p. 240.) I beseech thee to give me leave to attend thee in thy passage: for I am determined that *I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*, and Mat. VIII. 19

c *They took him as he was in the ship.*] This may seem an objection against the solution proposed in the *last note*; but I think the turn given in the *paraphrase* may remove it. If any are not satisfied with that answer, they must suppose that *Christ's going into an house*, mentioned by Matthew, was *some time after*; which seems not so natural a sense of Matthew's words. (See Mat. xiii. 36, with *note* f, p. 350.) But had that appeared to me the meaning of them, it would only have occasioned the alteration of a clause or two in the *paraphrase*; for it would have been improper to have divided the *explication* of the *parable of the tares* from the *parable* itself.

d *As they went in the way.*] As *this* and the *next story* are inserted by Matthew between his account of *Christ's giving commandment to cross the lake*, and his *entering into the ship* to do it (see Mat. viii. 18—23,) I cannot but conclude they both happened at *this time*; and consequently, that when Luke introduces it by saying it was *as they went in the way*, his meaning must be at large, *one day as Christ and his disciples were walking*, and not (as Sir *Isaac Newton* supposes) *as they went on in that journey* in which the *Samaritans* had refused him a lodging. The following words would indeed have been proper on that occasion: but they had also an universal propriety, as *Christ had no house* or stated lodging of his own, and was now *going over to a place* where we do not find he had any acquaintance. But if any think St. Luke's expression too strong to bear *this interpretation*, they must, if they will not impeach St. Matthew's account of it, conclude that *this little occurrence* happened *twice*, as it is very possible it might.

e Concluding from the tenor of some of them.] The *parables* of the *mustard-seed* and the *leaven* were both spoken *before the multitude* (Mat. xiii. 31. 34, p. 353, 354,) and they were both *so plain* that the *disciples* did not ask Christ to *expound them*; as indeed one can hardly imagine how any *explication* could have made them more intelligible.—The *scribe's forsaking Christ*, on the declaration he made of his *destitute circumstances*, makes it evident he was actuated by these views.

SECT. lxix.

and devote myself entirely to the service of thy kingdom. *And Jesus*, knowing the motives which engaged him to this resolution, *saith unto him*, Do not flatter yourself with the expectation of any temporal advantages from such an attendance; for I plainly tell you, that whereas (not to speak of domestic animals, which are under the care of man) even *the* very *foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests*, for themselves and their young; *yet the Son of man*, successful as his kingdom must at length be, does now appear in such low circumstances, that he *has not* so much as a place *where he may lay his head:* he knows not one day where he shall find food and lodging the next; and his followers must expect no better a condition. A declaration sufficient to deter a person who sought nothing but his present interest and advantage.

Mat. VIII. 20.

20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head. [LUKE IX. 58.]

21 *And to another of his disciples*, who had for some time attended his discourses, *he said follow me* statedly, as these my servants do, that thou mayest be trained up to take thy part with them in the ministry of the gospel. *But he said unto him, Lord*, I will most gladly do it; yet I beg thou wouldest *first permit me to go* home *and bury my* aged *father*[f], to whose remains I am going to pay my last duty. *But Jesus*, who thought it proper on this occasion to make an extraordinary trial of his faith and obedience, *said* again *unto him, Follow thou me* immediately *and leave the dead to bury their dead:* let those who are themselves spiritually dead, perform the rites of funeral; yea, let the dead remain unburied, rather than disobey my word when I give thee so great a commission; or than neglect it *but* one day when I say, as I now do, *Go thou and preach* this gospel of *the kingdom of God*[g], which

21 And [he said unto] another of his disciples, [Follow me: but he] said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. [LUKE IX. 59.

22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead; [but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. [LUKE IX. 60.

[f] *To go* home *and bury my* aged *father.*] Some think that this expression only intimates, his *father* was *so old* that he could not *live long*; but *Christ's answer* seems to take it for granted he was *already dead.*

[g] *Go thou and preach the kingdom of God.*] As *our Lord* called him now to *follow him*, we must conclude that this *commission* which he gives him to *preach* was not directly to be put in execution. The circumstance was plainly extraordinary, and might turn on reasons unknown to us. Christ might, for instance, foresee some particular obstruction that would have arisen from the interview with his friends at his *father's funeral*, which would have prevented his devoting himself to the *ministry*; to which he might refer in saying, *Let THE DEAD bury their dead.* I see no reason to suppose any regard to *the priests* being forbidden some usual ceremonies of *mourning*, which some have thought to be intended here.

h At

which thou hast heard, and shalt farther hear from me. SECT. lxix.

LUKE IX. 61. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house.

And, at a certain time[h] *another also said, Lord I will* presently *follow thee; but permit me first* to go and settle the affairs of my family, and *take my leave of them which are at my house*[i], as Elisha was permitted to do when called in so extraordinary a manner to the prophetic office,) 1 Kings xix. 20.) *And Jesus said unto him*, Take heed that no fond affection for any, who may stand related to thee, nor any solicitous concern about thy temporal affairs, prevent thee from executing the important purpose thou hast formed of devoting thyself to my service; for *no man having* once *laid his hand on the plough, and* afterwards *looking back, is fit for* the service of *the kingdom of God*[k]; as indeed, if the work of ploughing the ground require that a man should look before him and resolutely mind what he is about, you may easily imagine that the duties of a gospel minister will require a much more steady attention and more firm resolution. Luke IX. 61. 62

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

MAT. VIII. 23. And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him: [LUKE, and they launched forth:] [and there were also with him other little ships.] [MARK IV. — 36. LUKE VIII. 22.]

[*And* now, as it was said before that Jesus was about to cross the lake, *when he was entered into the ship, his disciples followed him; and they* directly *launched forth*, even as many as could conveniently get a passage in that vessel, or any others that were thereabouts; for they were all desirous to attend him; *and* several *other little ships were also with him. And as they were sailing* over the lake, Jesus laid himself down in the Mat. viii. 23 24

24 And behold, [LUKE,

h *At a certain time.*] This probably happened at another time; for it would have been very improper to have asked permission to *go and bid his domestics farewell*, when Christ had just made such an *answer* to the former: but the story is so short, and so much resembles the former that I chose (as St. Luke also does) to *join them together*. Nor do I think it any reflection on the *evangelists*, that they did not follow the *order of time* provided they do not assert a regard to it where they vary from it.

i *Permit me first* to settle the affairs of my family, and *take my leave*, &c.] In *this latitude* I doubt not but the *phrase* αποταξασθαι τοις εις τον οικον μου is to be taken here, though it has something of a *different signification*, Luke xiv. 33. sect. cxxi. Intending to give up his possessions, he probably designed to *order how they should be distributed* among his friends; as Heinsius has very well explained the passage.

k *No man having laid his hand on the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*] Hesiod has given it as the character of a good *ploughman*, that he *keeps his mind intent on his work*, that he may make a *straight furrow* and does not allow himself to *gaze about on his companions.* (*Hesiod.* Εργ. lib. ii. ver. 61—63.) *Our Lord*, on the like obvious principles, may use the phrase of *one that looks behind him while his hand is on the plough*, as a kind of *proverbial* expression for a *careless irresolute person*, who must be peculiarly unfit for the *Christian ministry*. How happy had it been for his church had this lively admonition been regarded, without which it is impossible ορθοτομειν τον λογον της αληθειας, *to divide*, or rather *direct the word of truth aright*, 2 Tim. ii. 15. See *Bos, Observ.* cap. vi. p. 26—32.

l *A great*

SECT. lxix.

the ship; and being wearied with the various labours of the day, *he fell asleep: and behold, there came down a violent storm of wind on the lake;* Mat. VIII. 24. *and* on a sudden it was so tempestuous, that *there arose a great* and unusual *agitation in the sea*[l], *insomuch that the vessel was* even *covered with the* swelling *waves, which beat into the ship, so that it was now full* of water, *and they were in* Mark IV. 38. *extreme danger* of being cast away. *And* [*Jesus*] in the mean time, for the refreshment of his weary body, as well as for the trial of their faith, *was asleep on a pillow in the stern of the ship,* being greatly fatigued with the labours of the day[m]. *And* when to all human appearance they were just sinking, *his disciples came to him, and awakened him, saying,* with great surprise and importunity, *Master, Master, is it no* manner of *concern to thee* that we are all of us in the utmost danger, and hast thou no regard to what we are exposed to in such a terrible extremity as this? *Lord, save us,* for *we are* just *perishing!* Mat. VIII. 26 *And he says to them, Why are ye so* exceeding *timorous, O ye of little faith?* Can you imagine that God would suffer Me to be lost in a tempest? or that I would consult my own safety in the neglect of yours? *Where is your faith?* and *how is it that you have no faith* in exercise on such an occasion, when you have had so many signal evidences both of my power and my tender care? And *then rising up,* with an air of Divine majesty and authority *he rebuked the winds and the raging of the water, and said to the sea,* as a master might do to a company of turbulent servants, *Peace, be still: and* he had no sooner spoken, but *the wind rested, and there was* presently *a great calm.* 27 *And the men* that were with him *were* greatly *amazed, and* struck with such a reverential awe that they *feared exceedingly, saying, to each other, What a wonderful person is this, who* has not only power over diseases, but *commandeth even* the most tumultuous elements, *the winds and the sea; and* amidst all their rage and confusion *they* humbly *obey him,* and are immediately composed at his command!

[LUKE, as they sailed, he fell asleep; and there came down a [great] storm of wind on the lake; and] there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves; [and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full;] [LUKE, and they were in jeopardy.] [MARK IV. 37. LUKE VIII. 23.] MARK IV. 38. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow:] [and his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying,] Master, [LUKE, Master,] carest thou not, [Lord, save us; we perish.] MAT. VIII. 25. LUKE VIII. 24.—] MAT. VIII. 26. And he saith unto them, Why are ye [so] fearful, O ye of little faith? [LUKE, Where is your faith?] [How is it that ye have no faith?] Then he arose and rebuked the winds, [LUKE, and the raging of the water:] [and said unto the sea, Peace, be still: and the wind ceased,] and there was a great calm. [MARK IV. 39, 40. LUKE VIII.—24, 25.] 27 But the men marvelled, [and they feared exceedingly, and said one to another,] What manner of man is this, that [LUKE, commandeth] even the winds and the sea, [LUKE, and they] obey him? [MARK IV. 41. LUKE VIII. —25.]

IMPROVE-

[l] *A great agitation in the sea.*] Σεισμὸς μεγας properly signifies a *mighty agitation*; probably it was something of a *hurricane*.

[m] Fatigued with the labours of the day.] This we may reasonably conclude from a review of the preceding *sections*. See also the latter part of *note* a, in the beginning of this *section*.

IMPROVEMENT.

How great and glorious does our blessed *Redeemer* appear, as having *all the elements* at his command, and exercising his dominion over *the winds and seas!* He stills the very *tempests* when they roar, and *makes the storm a calm*, (Psal. cvii. 29.) He silences at once the noise and fury of the tumultous *waves:* and, in the midst of its confusion, says to the raging *sea*, *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed*, (Job xxxviii. 11.) Who would not reverence and *fear him!* Who would not cheerfully *commit themselves to him!* Under such a protection, how courageously may his *church* ride through every *storm* and weather every *danger! Christ* is still with her, and she is safe even while he may seem to be *sleeping*. Blessed *Jesus!* that power of thine which here commanded the *tempest* into a *calm*, can easily silence all our tumultuous *passions*, and reduce our souls to that blessed *tranquillity* in which alone we can be capable of enjoying thee and ourselves. SECT. lxix. Mat. VIII. 27 24

May we still be applying to *Christ* with such importunate addresses; and, sensible how much we need his help, may we cry out, *Lord, save us, or we perish!* And may it be the language, not of suspicion and terror, but of *faith;* of a *faith* determined at all adventures to adhere to him, whatever dangers are to be encountered, or whatever advantages are to be resigned! 25

Did his compassion for us, and his desire of our salvation, engage him to submit to such *destitute* and calamitous *circumstances*, that when *the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, the Son of man* himself *had not* a place *where he might lay* that sacred *head* which with infinite mutual complacency and delight he had so often reposed *in the bosom of the Father!* May our zeal and love animate us cheerfully to take our part in his *indigence* and *distress*, if he calls us to it! May no considerations of *ease* or *interest*, or even of human *friendship*, lead us to turn a deaf ear to the *calls of duty;* or suffer us, when we once have *engaged in his service*, to think of *deserting it*, lest on the whole we should be judged *unfit for the kingdom of God!* May thy grace, O *Lord*, animate our souls, that nothing may prevent our *faithfulness unto death*, and so deprive us of that *crown of life* which thy grace has promised to such a character! (Rev. ii. 10.) 20 21 Luke IX. 62.

SECT.

SECT. LXX.

Christ being arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, dispossesses two demoniacs; and permitting the evil spirits to enter into a herd of swine, is desired by the inhabitants to withdraw; and so returns to the western side of the sea. Mat. VIII. 28, *to the end.* IX. 1. Mark V. 1—21. Luke VIII. 26—40.

MARK V. 1.

SECT. LXX.

Mark V. 1.

AND after they were thus delivered from the danger of the storm, *they came over to the other side of the sea* of Tiberias, *and arrived at the country of the Gadarenes;* a territory belonging, [*or*] at least adjacent to that of the ancient *Gergesenes*, or Girgashites, (see Gen. x. 16. xv. 21. Deut. vii. 1. and Josh. iii. 10.) *which is* situated *over-against Galilee;* being that tract of land which fell to the half-tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan, and was afterwards called Trachonitis.

2 *And when he was landed out of the ship,* he was no sooner got ashore, but *there immediately met him two men*[a] *possessed with demons, coming out of the sepulchres*[b], which were in a burying-place near the city, whither they had fled as to a place affording them some shelter, and suiting their gloomy imaginations; and they were both of them *exceeding fierce* and mischievous, *so that no one could* safely *pass by that way:* and [*one of these was*] *a certain man of the city with an unclean spirit, that had been* known to be *possessed*

3 *with demons for a long time; Who* was so terribly outrageous that he *wore no clothes, nor would abide in any house, but had his dwelling* sometimes in the burying ground, *among the tombs,* and sometimes in a desart, or a common, that

MARK V. 1.

AND they came over unto the other side of the sea, [LUKE, and arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, [*or* Gergesenes] which is over-against Galilee.] [MAT. VIII. 28.—LUKE VIII. 26.]

2 And when he was come out of the ship, [LUKE, to land,] immediately there met him [two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way;] [LUKE, a certain man out of the city,] with an unclean spirit, [LUKE, which had devils a long time;] [MAT. VIII.—28.—LUKE VIII. 27.—]

3 Who [wore no clothes, neither abode in *any* house, but] had *his* dwelling among the tombs, and no man could

a *There met him two men.*) Mark and Luke mention only *one*, who probably was the *fiercer* of the *two;* but this is no way inconsistent with the account that Matthew gives.—I cannot but observe here, that Mark tells this story in all other respects so much more circumstantially than Matthew, that it abundantly proves that *his gospel* was not (as Mr. Whiston maintains in his *Harmony*) an *abridgment of Matthew's.* The same remark may arise from comparing Mark v. 22---43 with Mat. ix. 18---26. and Mark ix. 17---27. with Mat. xvii. 14---18, and some other *parallel passages;* not to mention *histories* recorded by Mark, and not to be found in Matthew. See Mr. *Jones's Vindication of St. Matthew's Gospel*, chap. vii. and ix.

b *Coming out of the sepulchres.*] Grotius supposes that the *demons* chose to drive the men that they *possessed* among the *tombs*, to confirm some superstitious notions of the Jews relating to the power of *evil spirits* over the *dead.* The *heathens* had undoubtedly such notions: but I rather think, with Elsner, the *demoniacs* chose the caves of this *burying-ground* as a kind of *shelter;* and he has shewn that wretches in extremity sometimes did the like. See *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 66---68.

c A desart,

could bind him, no not with chains:—[LUKE VIII.—27.]

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces; neither could any man tame him.

5 And always night and day he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran, [and fell down before him,] and worshipped him; [LUKE VIII. 28.—]

7 And cried [LUKE, out] with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? [LUKE, I beseech thee,] I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not: [art thou come hither to torment us before the time?] [MAT. VIII. 29. LUKE VIII.—28.]

LUKE VIII. 29. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit, [*and* said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.] For oftentimes it had caught him; and he was kept bound with chains, and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was

that lay near it[c]; *and* was under so strong an operation of the diabolical power, that *no one could confine him even with chains: For he had often been bound with fetters and chains; yet* in a most surprising manner *the chains were broken asunder by him, and the fetters were beaten to pieces; and*, after all the methods that had been taken with him, *no one was able to tame him*, either by force or entreaties, or any kind of exorcism that had been tried upon him. *And* 5 *he was always night and day upon the mountains, and among the tombs, crying out* in a terrible manner: *and*, when there was no body else to spend his rage upon, *cutting himself with* sharp pieces of the *stones* he found there.

SECT. LXX.

Mark V. 4.

And when he saw Jesus afar off, the demon 6 that possessed him was so over-awed, that *he* immediately *ran and fell down* upon his face *before him*, with all the appearance of the greatest reverence, *and worshipped him: And crying out* 7 *with a loud voice, he said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God?* I am not come here to enter into any contest with thee, and *I beseech* [*and*] *adjure thee by* that *God* whose Son thou art, *that thou do not* exert the power which thou hast to *torment me:* I know there will be a season, when thou wilt have an ample triumph over me; but *art thou come hither to torment us before the time* allotted for our final punishment[d]? And this he spoke, as he was actuated by the demon that possessed him, who was afraid of being driven away: *For* Jesus was so Luke moved with pity and compassion at the sight of VIII. 29. such a miserable spectacle, that *he* already *had commanded the unclean spirit*, [*and*] *said* with an air of authority *to him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.* *For* (as it was observed before) *it had often seized him* in a most violent manner; *and* notwithstanding *he was bound with chains, and kept* under the closest confinement *in fetters*, yet none of them were strong enough to hold him, but he would still break loose; *and having broke* and torn off all *the bonds* that they

c A desart, or a common, that lay near it.] So it is said by Luke, ver. 29, that he was *driven into the wilderness.*

d *Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?*] Here was such a reference to the final sentence which Christ is to pass upon these *rebel spirits* in the *judgment of the great day*, to which they are *reserved* (Jude ver. 6.) as could not be dictated by *lunacy*; and it is much to be questioned whether either the *person speaking*, or any of the *hearers*, but Christ himself, understood the sense and propriety of it.

SECT. lxx. they could fix upon him, *he was driven by the* impetuous impulse of the raging *demon into* Luke VIII. 29 *the desart places*, where the burying ground lay.

was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) [MARK V. 8.]

30 *And Jesus asked* the evil spirit that was in *him, saying, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion; for we are many*[e]. And this reply was not without some reason, *because* the evil spirit, that possessed the man, had many others with him, and *a multitude of demons had entered into him*, and had been suffered to unite their malice and power in harassing and tormenting the wretched creature.

30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? [and he answered, saying, My name is Legion; for we are many:] because many devils were entered into him. [MARK V. 9.]

31 *And* as they found that Jesus was determined to dislodge them, *they earnestly entreated him that he would not send them* quite away *out of the country*[f]; hoping, that if they had permission to hover still about it, they might do something to obstruct the progress of the gospel, against which their chief efforts were centered: [*and*] they particularly were importunate, that he would not *command them to go out into the* bottomless *abyss*, the prison in which many of the fallen spirits are detained, and to which some who may, like these, have been permitted for a while to range at large, are sometimes by divine justice and power remanded. (Compare Rev. xx. 1—3. 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude ver. 6. and see *Grotius in loc.*)

31 And they besought him [much,] that he would not [send them away out of the country, *and*] command them to go out into the deep.—[MARK V. 10.]

Mark V. 11. *Now there was there* within their view, *at a considerable distance from them, on the mountains* near the sea-shore, *a great herd of many swine feeding on the mountain*; for, unclean as those animals were, the Jews in that country bred up great numbers of them out of regard to the gain of such merchandise, which they sold to the Roman soldiers and other Gentiles, who were very numerous

MARK V. 11. Now there was there [a good way off from them,] nigh unto the mountains, a great herd of [many] swine feeding [LUKE, on the mountain.] [MAT. VIII. 30. LUKE VIII. 32.—]

e *My name is Legion, for we are many.*] There is no need of concluding from hence that the *number* of these *evil spirits* was exactly the same with that of a *Roman legion*, which was now upwards of *six thousand*. (See *Pitisc. Lex. de Legione.*) It was a *phrase* that was often made use of to express a *great number*; (see *Lightf. Hor. Heb.* on Mark v. 9.) – It is observable that Luke here adds, that *many demons were entered into him*; so that it is evident he thought it not merely a *lunacy*, but a real *possession*. Probably a *band of evil spirits* united in the vexation of this wretched creature; but, in what *manner* and *order*, it is impossible for us to say, who know so little of *invisible beings*.

f *That he would not send them out of the country.*] It seems from Dan x. 13, 20, that *different evil genii* preside over *distinct regions* by the direction of Satan their prince. These, who perhaps were *spirits* of distinguished abilities, might be appointed to *reside thereabouts*, to oppose as much as possible the beneficial designs of Christ; and having made their observations on the characters and circumstances of the inhabitants, they might be capable of doing more mischief *here* than elsewhere, and on that account might desire leave to continue on the spot.

g Which

18 And all the devils besought him, saying, [If thou cast us out,] send us [*or* suffer us to go away] into the [herd of] swine, that we may enter into them. [MAT. VIII. 31. LUKE VIII.—32.]

numerous in these parts[g]. *And all the demons* which had possessed this miserable creature (set upon doing all the mischief that they could, though they were under such a sensible restraint, and desirous to bring an odium upon Jesus as the author of mischief) *entreated him* again, *saying* to him, *If thou* art determined, after all we have said, that thou wilt *cast us out* of this man, *send us*, [*or*] *give us leave to go away to the herd of swine* which is feeding yonder, *that we may enter into them;* for we have no power of hurting even them without thy leave. *And immediately Jesus permitted them* to do it; partly to punish those who dealt in so infamous a commodity, *and* chiefly to prove the reality of a diabolical agency in these cases[h], and to display the malice of those evil spirits: he therefore *said unto them*, You may *go*, since you desire it, and operate on those creatures as you please. *And* upon this *the unclean spirits went* directly *out of the man* whom they had possessed, *and entered into the herd of swine: and* such was the strange effect of their power, that, *behold, the whole herd* immediately grew mad, and *ran violently down a precipice into the sea*[i], *and were* all *suffocated*

SECT. LXX.

Mark V. 12.

13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave, [and said unto them, Go.] And the unclean spirits went out [LUKE of the man,] and entered into the [herd of] swine: and [behold], the [whole] herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and were choked in the sea, [and perished in the waters:] *and* they were about two thousand. [MAT. VIII. 32. LUKE VIII. 33.]

13

[g] Which they sold to the Roman soldiers, and other Gentiles, &c.] The *laws* of *Hyrcanus* had indeed prohibited the Jews from *keeping swine* (which shews it had been much practised among them); but these Gadarenes who had so many Gentiles in the neighbourhood, having long been under Heathen government (*Joseph. Antiq. Jud.* lib. xv. cap. 7. (al. 11), § 3; & *Bell. Jud.* lib. i. cap. 20 (al. 15), § 3), and living in the extreme part of the country, presumed to do it, scandalous and illegal as the employment was. See *Miracles of Jesus vindicated*, p. 34, 35.

[h] To prove the reality of a diabolical agency in these cases.] The cavils against *this miracle* are equally malicious and weak. *Our Lord's permitting the evil spirits to enter into the swine* was not properly *sending them* into those beasts, or if he had done it, the *punishment* to the owners would have been *just*; or had it been less apparently so, his extraordinary character as a *prophet*, and the proof he gave of a *Divine co-operation*, would have set him above *our censure* in an action, the full reasons of which we might not perfectly have known.—But though *this solution* is to me very satisfactory, it is not necessary to have recourse to it: for this action evidently appears both wise and gracious; inasmuch as it unanswerably demonstrated at once the malice of Satan and the extent of Christ's power over him. No miracles are more *suspicious* than pretended *dispossessions*, as there is so much room for collusion in them; but it was self-evident that *a herd of swine* could not be *confederates* in any fraud: *their death*, therefore, in this instructive and convincing circumstance, was ten thousand times a greater blessing to mankind than if they had been slain for food, as was intended

[i] *The whole herd ran violently down a precipice into the sea.*] This story is an unanswerable demonstration of the error of the *hypothesis* advanced by the *author* of the late *Enquiry into the Case of the Demoniacs*, &c. (mentioned before in *note* c on Luke iv. 33, p. 191.) That ingenious writer is forced to suppose *these swine frighted by the two madmen*, and so *driven down the precipice*: but, not to mention the *absurdity* of supposing their *lunacy* thus to rage after Christ had spoken the healing word, one might venture to appeal to any body that has observed what awkward creatures *swine* are to drive, whether it would be possible, without a *miracle*, for *two men* to drive *twenty*, and much less *two thousand* of them into the water. It is a pitiable thing to see a writer of such a character reduced to so hard a shift. He seems indeed to think the common notion of

SECT. lxx. *suffocated in the sea, and perished in the waters*[k]; *being* in number *about two thousand.*

Mark V. 14. *And the swine-herds, seeing what was done, fled* in great amazement, some one way and some another, *and told all* the story, both *in the city and country; and* circumstantially related *what had happened to the* two *demoniacs*, and how the demons had been ejected from them. *And* when the people heard it, they were so much impressed with the report, that *they went out* in crowds *to see what was done*, and to satisfy themselves, on the testimony of their own senses, as to the truth

15 of so unparalleled a fact. *And when they came to Jesus, and saw the demoniac* (even him *that had* been tormented by *the legion*, and *out of whom the demons were departed)* calmly *sitting at the feet of Jesus* to receive his instructions, *and* now decently *clothed and* perfectly *composed*, as being restored to his right mind, they were struck with such a mixture of astonishment and reverence, that *they were afraid* of conversing with so great a Prophet, and dreaded the farther effects of his power. (Compare Luke v. 8.

16 sect. xxxiv.) *And they also who* were present, and *had seen* all that passed from the beginning, gave them a particular account of [*it*] and *told them*, more largely than the swine-herds had done, *by what means the demoniac had been recovered; and also* told them *concerning the swine*, how they had been so strangely destroyed by the apparent agency of those evil spirits by which the men had before been possessed.

Mat. VIII. 34 *And behold*, all the inhabitants of *the whole city* of Gadara[l], as the rumour increased, *came out to meet Jesus; [and]* indeed *the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about* flocked to see so wonderful a person: *and when they saw him, they* presently *began*, with all submission, *to entreat him that he would* please to *depart from them*

14 And they that fed the swine, [LUKE, when they saw what was done,] fled, and told [every thing] in the city, and in the country, [and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.] And they went out to see what it was that was done. [MAT. VIII. 33. LUKE VIII. 34, 35.—]

15 And they come to Jesus, and see [the man] that was possessed with the devil, and had the Legion, [out of whom the devils were departed,] sitting [at the feet of Jesus,] and clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid. [LUKE VIII.—35.]

16 And they [also] that saw *it*, told them [by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed,] and also concerning the swine. [LUKE VIII. 36.]

MAT. VIII. 34— And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus [LUKE, *and* the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about;] and when they saw him, they [began to pray him] that he would

of *possessions* absurd and dangerous, and certainly opposes it with a very good design: but it is hard to say, how Christ could have encouraged that notion more than by his conduct on this occasion; and I doubt not but this extraordinary occurrence was permitted chiefly to prove the *reality* of these *possessions*, and will always be effectual for the conviction of every impartial enquirer.

[k] *And were all suffocated, and perished in the waters.*] The display of the malignity of these *demons*, in this instance, served to illustrate the value of every miracle of this kind, and to display the grace as well as power of Christ in every *dispossession*; in which view *this circumstance* appears to have been determined with great wisdom and goodness, though folly and perverseness have so strangely disguised it.

[l] *The whole city* of Gadara.] Josephus describes it as a very considerable place. It was by the righteous judgment of God, the *first Jewish city* that fell into the hands of the Romans in the fatal war under Vespasian, and suffered great extremities. *Joseph. Bell. Jud.* lib. iv. cap. 7. (al. v. 3.) § 3, 4. See *Wits. de Decem Trib.* cap. 8. § 2.

Lest

depart [Luke, them] out of coasts; [Luke, ey were taken eat fear: and he p into the ship, turned back a- [Mark V. 17. VIII. 37.]

them out of their coasts; pretending that they, who had so great a number of Gentiles round them, were not fit to receive so great and holy a person: *for they* unreasonably looked on him as the author of the calamity which befel the swine, and *were seized with great fear*, lest he should send some farther judgments upon them, which they were sensible, the great irregularities of their behaviour well deserved [m]: *and he*, by no means willing to obtrude his presence on those who were so insensible as not to desire it, *went into the ship* again, *and returned back* to the western shore of the sea.

SECT. lxx.

Mat. VIII. 34

k V. 18. And e was come in- hip, he that had ssessed with the [out of whom ils were depart- ayed him that ht be with him. : VIII. 38.—]

And when he was come into the ship, the demoniac, out of whom the demons were now *departed*, fearing lest, after this (as it had been supposed of some, Mat. xii. 43—45, sect. lxiii.) he might be in danger of a relapse, and, dreading the terrors of his former condition, *entreated him that he might* be allowed to *continue with him*, to enjoy the farther benefit of his instructions.

Mark V. 18.

lowbeit, Jesus d him not, but him away, say- return to thine ouse, *and*] go to thy friends, l them how great the Lord [God] done for thee, th had compas- n thee. [Luke -38, 39.—]

Yet 19 *Jesus did not permit him* to do it, *but sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house*, [*and*] *go to thy friends* and relations *at home*, *and* fail not particularly to *tell them how great things the Lord God* of Israel, whose messenger I am, *has* by his Almighty power *performed for thee; and* how graciously he *has had compassion on thee* in those deplorable circumstances which rendered thee a spectacle of horror to them, and all that saw thee.

nd he departed, egan to publish ghout the whole *ad*] in Decapo- ow great things had done for and all men did . [Luke VIII.

And upon this *he went away*, 20 *and began to publish through the whole city* of Gadara, in which he dwelt, [*and*] *in* all the neighbouring region of *Decapolis*, *what great* and wonderful *things Jesus had done for him: and all men were amazed* at so stupendous a miracle.

r. IX. 1. And red into a ship, ssed over, and nto his own city.

And Jesus, *having entered into the ship*, departed thence as soon as the demoniac was dismissed: and, leaving those ungrateful people who had no greater value for his presence, *he passed over* the sea of Galilee, *and* shortly after *came to his own city* of Capernaum, where he had dwelt after his leaving Nazareth. (See Mat. iv. 13, p. 182.

Mat. IX. 1.

And

est he should send some farther judg- upon them, &c.] Some have ima- that they thought *Christ* a *magician*, ired the effects of his art; but the ssigned in the *paraphrase* seems to me much more decent, and, all things considered, more likely. They were probably a *licentious* sort of people, and might naturally, from what they saw, *fear* some *farther chastisement* from so holy a Prophet.

[m] *Gladly*

SECT lxx.

Mark V. 21. *And it came to pass, that when Jesus had passed over again in the ship to the other side* of the lake, he was no sooner landed, but *a great multitude gathered to him; [and] the people* most *gladly received him*[n]; *for they* expected his speedy return, and *were all* impatiently *waiting for him: and he continued* some time *on the sea-coast*, teaching and working miracles.

MARK V. 21. And [it came to pass, that] when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him; [*and* the people *gladly* received him; for they were all waiting for him:] and he was nigh unto the sea. [LUKE VIII. 40.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Mark V. 3, 13. FROM the remarkable story which is here before us, we must surely see the most apparent reason to adore the good providence of God, which *restrains* the malignant *spirits* of hell from spreading those *desolations* among *beasts* and *men*, which would otherwise quickly turn the *earth* into a *wilderness*, or rather into a *chaos*. But what matter of joy is it to reflect, that all their fury and rage
12 is under a *Divine control*, and that they cannot hurt even the meanest animal without permission from above!

The unhappy creature, whose state is here described in such lively colours, is an affecting emblem of those who are in a spiri-
4,5 tual sense under the power of *Satan*. Thus do they *break asunder* the *bonds* of reason and gratitude, and sometimes of authority and even of shame; and, thus *driven on* by the frenzy of their lusts and passions, they are so outrageous as to *injure others* and to *wound themselves*. Human attempts to moderate and reform them may
15 be vain; but let us remember that the Almighty Saviour has a *voice*, which can put this worst kind of *demons* to flight, and restore those that have been agitated by them to their *right mind*, so as so place them *at his feet* in holy *composure*, and in calm rational attention.

7 We see here *a legion of devils* trembling before the *Son of God*, confessing his superior *power*, howling as it were in their chains, and *entreating* the *delay* of their *torments*. And can human *pride* stand before him, and *rebellious mortals* triumph over him? Happy souls, that are *listed under his banners!* They shall share the *victories* of the great *Captain of their salvation*, and *the God of peace shall bruise Satan under their feet shortly*. (Rom. xvi. 20.)

17 But oh, how stupid and how wretched were these *Gadarenes* who preferred their *swine* to their *souls*, and *besought him to depart out of their coasts*, whose presence was their *defence* and their *glory!* May Divine grace preserve us from a temper like theirs! And may

[n] *Gladly received him.*] This Grotius has observed to be the meaning of the word (απεδεξαντο), and in this sense it may likewise be understood, Acts xv. 4, and xviii. 27.

may those of us, who have ourselves experienced the restoring power of *Christ* and his *gospel*, be engaged to *adhere* to our great *Benefactor* and gratefully to *devote those powers* to his service, which he has rescued from dishonour, mischief, and ruin! SECT. LXX. Mark V. 18, 20.

SECT. LXXI.

Christ, being entertained at Matthew's house, justifies his conversing with publicans and sinners; and vindicates his disciples for not keeping so many fasts as the Pharisees and the disciples of John did.
Mat. IX. 10—17. Mark II. 15—22. Luke V. 29, *to the end.*

LUKE V. 29.

AND Levi made him a great feast in his own house: [MARK, and it came to pass, that as Jesus sat at meat,] [behold,] a great company of publicans [and sinners came, and] [MARK, sat also together with Jesus and his disciples,] and others; [MAT. for there were many, and they followed him.] MAT. IX. 10. MARK II. 15.

LUKE V. 29.

NOW, after Jesus had continued for a while on the sea-shore (as was observed, Mark v. 21,) he entered into Capernaum: *and* Matthew, or *Levi*, who dwelt there, and who had some time since been called from his former office of a publican into the number of his stated attendants (see sect. xlv. p. 249), desirous at once to shew his respects to Christ, and to give his former companions and acquaintance an opportunity of enjoying his instructive conversation, *made a great entertainment for him in his own house*[a]: *and it came to pass that, as Jesus sat at table* there, *behold, a great number of the publicans, and* such as had the general character of *sinners*, being invited by Matthew, *came, and sat also at the table with Jesus and his disciples; and* several *others* at that time were present; *for there were many* of the character above described in Christ's train (compare Mat. xi. 12, and Luke xv. 1), *and they followed him* with great eagerness, being charmed with the condescension with which he SECT. LXXI. Luke V. 29.

[a] *A great entertainment for him in his own house.*] Nothing has perplexed the generality of *harmonies* more, and nothing has thrown the *authors* of them into greater *inconsistency* with the *sacred writers*, than their taking it for granted, that *Matthew made this entertainment* on the *very day* that *Christ called him* to attend upon him. The early *harmonist* of *Tatian* and *Ammonius* very justly separated them. (See *Chemnit. Harm.* cap. 43.) And, to the many convincing arguments which Mr. Jones has brought to prove, that they ought to be separated (which see in his *Vindication of Matthew*, p. 129—137), I will add, that it seems to me very evident, they were not *both* on the *same day*, from this *consideration* (so obvious, that I wonder none should have mentioned it); so many things happened *before the calling of Matthew*, that the day must be far advanced, and there could not have been time to prepare *a great feast*, and invite a number of guests, at least *till supper* (see sect. xlv); and so many things happened *after the feast* (see sect. lxxii) that we cannot suppose them to have been crowded into the little remainder of the evening *after supper*: on which account it is certain *the feast* was *after the day of his calling*, perhaps, (as it seems by the intermediate stories) some *months after*, when he had made up his accounts, and regularly passed his business into other hands, which, to be sure, from a principle of justice, as well as prudence, he would take care to do.

SECT. lxxi. he treated them, while many others shunned them with abhorrence.

Luke V. 30. *But when* the more reserved and stricter sort of people in that place, and in particular *their scribes and Pharisees*, who pretended to be most exact and scrupulous in their conduct, *saw him* thus openly converse and *eat with publicans and sinners, they* were offended, and *murmured at his disciples* on that account, *saying*, *Why do you*, who should be examples to others, *eat and drink* in such scandalous company as this? [*and*] especially, *how is it, that your Master*, who sets up for such an extraordinary Prophet, will allow himself to do it? for, while our traditions teach even the students, and much more the teachers of the law, to avoid all commerce with such polluted and infamous persons, you see that he publicly *eats and drinks with* a considerable number of *publicans and sinners*, as if there were no scandal in being accounted their friend and companion.

30 But [when] their scribes and Pharisees [MARK, saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they] murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink, [MARK, *and* how is it, that [your Master] eateth and drinketh] with publicans and sinners? [MAT. IX. 11, MARK II. 15.

Mark II. 17. *And Jesus, having heard* that they were so offended at [*it*,] *answered them, saying, They that are in* perfect *health have no need* of the converse and advice *of the physician, but those that are sick;* and therefore, out of compassion to their need of him, he visits and converses with them, though it cannot otherwise be agreeable to him to do it: and I act on the same principles: for *I am not come to call the righteous*, as you arrogantly imagine yourselves to be, *but* such poor *sinners* as these, *to repentance* and salvation.

MARK II. 17. When Jesus heard *it*, he [LUKE, answering] saith unto them, They that are whole, have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. [MAT. IX. 12,—13, LUKE V. 31, 32.]

Mat. IX. 13. *But*, if you are offended at it, you may *go your way, and* would do well to set yourselves to *learn the meaning of that* instructive [*scripture*,] (Hos. vi. 6.) which I cited on a former occasion (see Mat. xii. 7, p. 270), and which you Pharisees are so ready to forget, "*I require mercy, and not sacrifice.*" For, had you understood this saying, you would have seen that a ceremonial institution of Divine authority, and much more a mere human tradition, is to give way to the great duties of humanity and charity, even where men's bodies, and much more where their souls are concerned.

MAT. IX. 13.—But go ye, and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.

Mark II. 18. Another occurrence which happened at the same time, *and* bore some resemblance to the former, was this, *The disciples of John* the Baptist, who had himself lived so austere a life, *and* was now in a calamitous state of confinement, as well as the disciples *of the Pharisees, used to fast* often; *and* the latter particularly twice a week; (compare

MARK II. 18. And the disciples of John, and of the Pharisees, used to fast: and [the disciples of John] come and say unto him, Why do [we] the disciples of John, and [Luke, likewise *the disciples*] of

of the Pharisees fast often, [Luke, and make prayers,] but thy disciples fast not, [Luke, but eat and drink?] [Mat. IX. 14, Luke V. 33.

pare Luke xviii. 12, sect. cxxix). Now, seeing Jesus at a publican's table on a festival occasion, surrounded with so many of his stated followers, some of *the disciples of John come and say unto him, Whence is it that we the disciples of John, and also those of the Pharisees,* have *frequently* our days of solemn devotion, in which we *fast, and make* many *prayers* and supplications to God for ourselves and the people? *whereas thy disciples fast not* at all, that we can perceive; *but,* on the contrary, *eat and drink* freely, though thou professest a righteousness superior to that of the scribes and Pharisees. (Mat. v. 20, sect. xxxviii.)

sect. lxxi.

Mark II. 18.

19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber [mourn *and*] fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. [Mat. IX. 15. —Luke V. 34.]

And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber, who are invited to attend the nuptial ceremony, with any decency *mourn [and] fast, while the bridegroom is* yet continuing *with them? As long as they have* the pleasure of the presence and company of *the bridegroom among them, they cannot* reasonably be expected to *fast,* and every one would then account it to be out of season. Now my presence and converse renders this a kind of festival to my disciples: for as John taught you but a little before his confinement, I am the great Bridegroom of my church [b]; you cannot therefore in reason expect I should command them to fast now, or that they should do it without such a command.

19

20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. [Mat. IX. —15, Luke V. 35.]

But, I assure you, *the days will* quickly *come, when,* as your master is separated from you, so even I, *the bridegroom, shall be taken away from them; and then they,* must expect to undergo a great deal of hardship, and particularly *shall* be obliged frequently to *fast in those days;* as those whom I have mentioned, might do, if their festival was interrupted by the removal of their beloved friend, whose joys they were sharing [c]. (Compare 1 Cor. iv. 11; 2 Cor. xi. 27.)

20

Luke V. 36. And he spake also a parable unto them, No man putteth

Nor do I now think fit to lay such rigorous commands upon them, because prudence will require me at present to accommodate their trials to their strength. *And,* farther to illustrate this,

Luke V. 36.

b I am the great bridegroom of my church.] Some have supposed there is, in this *similitude* which Christ has used, a reference to the book of *Canticles;* and it is possible there may. See *Carpzov. Defence of the Hebrew Bible,* p. 220, 221.) There is no doubt a reference to what John had lately said to his *disciples* so expressly on that head. John iii. 29, p. 153.

c If their festival was interrupted, &c.] *our Lord* seems here, with a beautiful propriety seldom observed, to suppose some *hostile invasion* to happen during the time of a *nuptial feast,* in which the *bridegroom* should either be slain or taken prisoner, which would damp all the joy of his friends, and change the scene into lamentation, fasting, and mourning.

SECT. lxxi.

this, *he spake also a parable*, or proposed another similitude *to them*, saying, *No man*, when he is mending clothes, *will* of choice *sew a piece of*

Luke V. 36. *new cloth on an old garment* [d]; but rather chooses what is a little worn: for *otherwise* it will be found that *both the new*, being stronger than the other, *makes a rent* in the edges of it when it comes to be stretched; *and the piece that was [taken] out of the new, [and] put in to* mend the former rent and *fill it up, agrees not* in colour and form *with the old*; and, being improperly put together, is of no service to the garment, *[but] takes away* more *from the old* than it adds to it; *and* thus *the rent is* increased and *made worse* than it was before.

putteth a piece [of new cloth unto an old garment;] if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new, [*and* put in to fill it up,] agreeth not with the old, [MARK] *but* taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.] [MAT. IX. 16. MARK II. 21.]

37 *And* again, on the same principles, *no* wise *man puts new wine into old bottles*, where the leather is weakened and almost worn out, (compare Josh. ix. 4, 13, and Psal. cxix. 83); for *else*, if he should, the fermentation of *the new wine will* soon *burst the bottles, and* so *the wine*

38 *will be spilt, as well as the bottles destroyed: But new wine must be put into new bottles, and* by this means *both are preserved.* Now, as in the ordinary affairs of life, common sense dictates a regard to the mutual agreement and disagreement of things, it is necessary that I should attend to them in my conduct towards my disciples; and, as they have not been inured to such severities as you and the Pharisees have long practised [e], I do not therefore choose immediately to impose them, lest otherwise, to the great detriment of the world, they should be discouraged from attending upon me.

37. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and [MARK the wine] be spilled; and the bottles shall perish: [MAT. IX. 17.—MARK II. 22—]

38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. [MAT. IX. 17. MARK II.—22.]

And you cannot surely blame me for this, when

d *New cloth on an old garment.*] The proper meaning of the words ῥακους αγναφου, by which *new cloth* is here expressed in the *original*, is *cloth* that has not passed through the *fuller's hands*, and which is consequently much *harsher* than what has been often washed and worn; and therefore, yielding less than that, will *tear away the edges* to which it is sewed. This sense Albert has vindicated from exceptions not worth mentioning here. See *Albert. Observ.* p. 71—76.

e As you and the Pharisees have long practised.] That the *Pharisees* used to *fast twice a week* is plain from Luke xviii. 12; and, no doubt, their young people were trained up to it. But it may be objected, that John [illegible] consequently might have answered, that the *disciples of Christ* might *as well*, and *as soon* as *they*, have been brought under such severities and restraints. But the truth is, it was not divinely required of the *one* or the *other*. The character and circumstances of John laid *them* under some engagements not common to *Christ's disciples*, as he intimates; and, considering where and how the *Baptist* appeared, it is very probable many of his stated *disciples* were *Essenes*, who (as it is well known) were a kind of *hermit Jews*, educated in great *abstinence* and more frequent *fastings* than any of the rest of them. See *Prideaux's Connection*, Part II. p. 358.) And if so, nothing could have been more convincing than this reasoning.

SECT. lxxi.

when you consider, how difficult it is to alter the ways of living, to which people have been accustomed, even in less things than these now in question. As for instance, though some may be fond of new wine, while it is yet fermenting in the vessel, yet those that have been used to drink another sort, will have no liking to it; *and no man who has* generally *drank* good *old* [*wine*] that is well ripened and refined, *will immediately choose* to drink *new; for he says, The old is better*, as being both more pleasant and more wholesome. Judge then how fit it is that I should not oblige my disciples to a new course of severities at once, but gradually form their characters to what the honour of their future profession and the usefulness of their lives may require.

Luke V. 39.

39 No man also having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

IMPROVEMENT.

THERE is no reason to wonder that *Matthew* should gladly embrace so proper an opportunity of introducing other *publicans* and *sinners* into the presence of that condescending *Saviour*, from whom, though he once was numbered among them, he had received *grace* and the *apostleship*. Let us with pleasure observe how ready our blessed *Lord* was to receive them. Surely, whatever *offence* the proud *Pharisees* might take on such an occasion, *Jesus* will appear peculiarly amiable in such a circle as this. Compassionate Redeemer! thou didst, as the great *Physician of souls*, willingly converse with objects that must have been most hateful to thy pure and holy nature! May we, each of us, have a due sense of the *malignity of sin*, that fatal *disease of the soul*, that we may with a becoming temper apply to *Christ* for a *cure!* May we also, like him, be willing to condescend to the *meanest* and *vilest*, if it may be the means of winning them over to true religion and happiness! ever preferring *mercy* to *sacrifice*, and choosing rather to govern ourselves by the dictates of a benevolent heart than by the maxims of proud and censorious men.

Luke V. 29. 30 31, 32 Mat. IX. 13.

Christ would not discourage his *disciples* by *over-rigorous institutions:* and it is unfit that his religion should be burthened with them. He suits the duties of his people to their circumstances, and kindly proportions their work to their strength, with a tender reward to their weakness, till by degrees they may be fitted for the more difficult and humbling services. From his *example*, and the whole genius of his *gospel*, let us learn to make all proper *allowances* to those about us, that we may teach them, and train them up as *they are able to bear it;* not crushing them under any unnecessary load, nor denying them any indulgence which true friendship will permit us to grant them; lest the good ways of God should be misrepresented, disgraced, and abandoned, through

Luke V. 36—39.

SECT. lxxi. our imprudent, though well-meaning, *severity:* a caution to be peculiarly observed in our conduct towards *young persons;* and not to be forgotten with respect to those who, like the *disciples* here in question, are training up for the *ministerial office.*

SECT. LXXII.

Christ, having in the way cured a woman by the touch of his garment, raises the daughter of Jairus from the dead, and afterwards performs some other miracles. Mat. IX. 18—34. Mark V. 22, *to the end.* Luke VIII. 41, *to the end.*

MAT. IX. 18.—

SECT. lxxii. Mat. IX. 18. *WHILE he was speaking these things to them* in Matthew's house[a], *behold* a very remarkable circumstance happened, which opened the way to one of the most signal miracles which Christ ever performed: for, though it was an uncommon thing for persons in an elevated rank of life to pay any regard to him (see John vii. 48), *there came a certain ruler of the synagogue* in that city of Capernaum, *whose name was Jairus: and when he* was entered into the room where Jesus was, and *saw him, he fell* down *at his feet* with the profoundest humility, *and worshipped him* in the presence of all the company, *and entreated him to come* immediately *to his house:* Luke VIII. 42. *For he had one only daughter, about twelve years old, and,* having in the bloom of life been seized with a very dangerous distemper, *she* then *lay,* to all human appearance, *at the* very *point of* Mark V. 23. *death. And he* applied himself to Jesus with the utmost importunity, and *earnestly entreated him, saying, My* dear *little daughter is in the last extremity,* [*or*] *is* perhaps, as she was just expiring, when I left her, *even now dead*[b]; [*I beseech*

MAT. IX. 18.— WHILE he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler [of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet] and worshipped him; [LUKE, and besought him, that he would come into his house:] [MARK V. 22.—LUKE VIII. 41.]

LUKE VIII. 42.— For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a-dying.

MARK V. 23. And he besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death, [*or* is even now dead;] *I pray*

a *While he was speaking these things to them* in Matthew's house.] These words fix the order of this section so plainly, that it is surprising Mr. Le Clerc should suppose that many events happened *between the discourses* recorded just above, and this application of Jairus to Christ, which St. Matthew so strongly connects. That critic is driven to the hard expedient of *paraphrasing* this clause thus: "While he discoursed with them on the same subject, which he had been upon, the beginning of the year;" which is extremely unnatural, and, so far as I can recollect, quite unexampled in any author ancient or modern. (See *Le Clerc's Harmony.* p. 197.) Had he thought of what is suggested above, sect. lxxi. note a, p. 371. to prove Matthew's feast did not immediately follow *his calling,* he would have seen this criticism as unnecessary as it is forced.

b *Or is* perhaps,—*even now dead.*] It is certain, from Mark's expression, εσχατως εχει, which is literally rendered, *is in the last extremity,* as well as from the message relating to her death, which both he and Luke afterwards mention, that the young lady *was not dead* when her father came out; and consequently that Matthew's phrase, αρτι ετελευτησεν (if not Luke's αυτη

pray thee come and lay thine hands on her, that she may be healed, and she shall live. [MAT. IX.—18.]

MAT. IX. 19. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and *so did* his disciples. [LUKE, But as he went,] [much people followed him, and thronged him.] MARK V. 24. LUKE VIII.—42.]

MARK V. 25. And [behold] a certain woman [which was diseased with] an issue of blood twelve years, [MAT. IX. 20. LUKE VIII. 43.]

26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all [her living] that she had [upon *them*, neither could be healed of any;] and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse; [LUKE VIII.—43.]

27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched [LUKE, the border of] his garment: [MAT. IX. —20. LUKE VIII. 44.—]

28 For she said [within

seech thee] therefore, *that thou wouldest* be pleased to *come, and lay thine hands on her, that she may recover; and* I doubt not but, extreme as the case is, if thou wilt interpose in her behalf, *she shall live.* SECT. lxxii. Mark V. 23.

And Jesus arose and followed him, and [*so did*] *his disciples. Now, as he was going* to the ruler's house, *much people followed him* to see the event; *and* they *pressed upon him* in such a manner that he could not walk without some difficulty. Mat. IX. 19.

And behold, among those that were crowding about him, there was *a certain* poor unhappy *woman who had* been long afflicted with a grievous disorder, having *laboured under a flux of blood for* no less than *twelve years: And* she *had suffered a great deal from* the *many physicians* she had consulted, by disagreeable medicines and uneasy restraints, as well as by the great expence she had been at in applying to them: for indeed she had wasted all her substance, *and spent all that she had upon them*[c]: *but* her distemper was so inveterate, that she *could not be healed by any; and*, on the whole, she *was not at all the better* for their prescriptions, *but rather grew worse*, and weaker than before; And, *having heard of Jesus*, and the extraordinary cures he had wrought, being ashamed publicly to mention her case, she *came in the crowd behind* him, *and touched* the fringe which, according to the Divine commandment (Numb. xv. 38, and Deut. xxii. 12), he wore upon *the border of his garment. For*, as she knew that many had before Mark V. 25. 26 27 28

αὐτῇ ἀπέθνησκε), is to be taken in this extent. She had been *given over* when her father left her, and actually *was dead* before he could return; and he might therefore, when he applied to Christ for his miraculous assistance, be ready to fear she was *by this time dead*, and might accordingly express himself in such a manner as to intimate his apprehension of it. Nor is it necessary, after all, that we should understand the phrase in Matthew as implying she was *now* actually *dead*; for ἄρτι does not only signify what is *now come to pass* but what is *just at hand* (as may be seen in Phavorinus); and so it may imply no more than that she was considered as *just dead*, and that there was no hope of her recovery but by a miracle.

c *Spent all that she had upon them.*] The ingenious Dr. Freind imagines that he discovers something remarkable in the *difference* of those seemingly *synonymous terms* which Mark and Luke make use of upon this occasion, and pleads that δαπανησασα, in the former, signifies to *squander away*; whereas προσαναλωσασα, in the latter, signifies a more *gradual consumption* of her stock, by taking a little at a time from it; (see *Dr. Freind's History of Physic*, p. 37.) But, with submission to so great a name, I am not satisfied of the justice of the remark, since, on the one hand, δαπαναω is used in a better sense, 2 Cor. xii. 15. (and δαπανη, in Luke xiv. 28, is the *necessary expence* of building as a prudent man would compute it); and, on the other hand, αναλισκω plainly signifies to *destroy* or *consume*, however that destruction or consumption be accomplished. (See Luke ix. 54, and 2 Thess. ii. 8.) Nor does it seem altogether certain that a *tenderness* in speaking of others of the faculty is any sure *diagnostic* of a *physician's* writings.

d *I shall*

SECT. lxxii.

fore been healed by touching him (see Luke vi. 19. p. 283, she had such a firm persuasion of the virtue that was in him, and of his power to cure her, that *she said within herself, If I may but touch* any part of *his clothes I shall be recovered.*[d] *And immediately* on her having done it, *the fountain of her blood* that issued from her *was* at once staunched and *dried up; and she felt* such an unusual vigour and flow of spirits, that she plainly perceived *in her body that she was healed of that* wasting and dangerous *distemper* with which she had been chastised for so long a time[e].

[within herself,] If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. [MAT. IX. 21.]

29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. [LUKE VIII. —44.]

30 *And* upon this she would have retired unobserved: but *Jesus*, who had secretly performed the cure by the concurring efficacy of his will, *immediately knowing in himself that* healing *virtue was gone out of him*, thought fit on this occasion to shew that it had not escaped his notice,[f] as well as to illustrate and commend the faith of the patient; and therefore he immediately *turned* himself *about in the crowd, and*, looking round him, *said, Who* is it that *has* just now *touched my clothes? And all* the rest that were near him *denying it*[g], *Peter, and his disciples that were near him, said unto him, Sir,*[h] *Thou seest that the multitude are crowding around thee, and press thee* on every side, *and dost thou say, Who has touched me?* One might rather ask, Who that has walked near thee has not done it? or which way is it possible, in such a crowd as this, to avoid

30 And Jesus immediately knowing in himself, that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? LUKE VIII. 45.—]

Mark V. 28.

29

Luke VIII. 45.

LUKE VIII.—45. When all denied, Peter, and [his disciples] that were with him, said [unto him,] Master [thou seest] the multitude throng thee, and press *thee*, and sayest thou, Who touched me? [MARK V. 31.]

d *I shall be recovered.*] It is in the *original* σωθησομαι, *I shall be saved*; and there are many other places in which the word is used in the same sense; as to be sure it may with great propriety be applied to a *rescue* from any imminent danger or pressing calamity, especially in an extraordinary way. Compare Mark v. 23. vi. 56. Luke viii. 36. xvii. 19. xviii. 42. John xi. 12. and Acts iv. 9.

e *Of that distemper* with which she had been chastised, &c.] This being the plain meaning of μαστιγος here, I did not think it necessary to render it *plague* or *scourge*, as I have done in some other places.

f To shew that it had not escaped his notice.] And perhaps also to prevent a *superstitious regard* to any thing which might look like a *relic of his*, and from which weak people might, without any warrant, have expected benefit.

g *All denying it.*] The phrase not necessarily implying that the *woman* herself *denied it*, it would be unjust to suppose she was base or foolish enough immediately to *deny* what she had done; especially as the next moment we find her *owning it at large* with all possible candour.

h *Peter, and his disciples—said unto him, Sir.*] Our English word *Master*, which we indifferently apply to almost any man to whom we speak, whether learned or unlearned, and which *modern usage* in common converse generally appropriates to *inferiors*, does by no means answer either to the Greek διδασκαλε, which signifies *teacher*, and would be most literally rendered *doctor* (a word just of the same import in its *original* language,) or to επιστατα, the word here used, which denotes at least a presiding *authority*. I have therefore here chose to render it *Sir*; and should think διδασκαλε might as well be rendered *Rabbi*, as by any other word I can recollect. It is no wonder that *titles* of honour and respect cannot be perfectly *translated* from one *language* into another, considering the diversity of *ranks* and of *ceremonies* in different nations.

46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

avoid it? *And Jesus said*, I am well aware that *somebody* here *has touched me*, not merely by accident, but on some important design: *for I perceive that* a healing *virtue* and efficacy *is gone out of me*, and am not ignorant of the particulars of the cure it has produced. SECT. lxxii. Luke VIII. 46.

MARK V. 32. And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.
LUKE VIII. 47. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she [knowing what was done in her,] came [fearing and] trembling, and falling down before him, she [told him all the truth, *and*] declared unto him before all the people, for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. [MARK V. 33.]

And upon this *he looked round about* again, *to see her who had done this*; and directed his eye towards her with some particular regard. *And when the woman saw that she was not concealed* from his all-penetrating view, *knowing* (as we before observed) *what* a marvellous work *was wrought in her, she came fearing and trembling*, lest he should be displeased with this surreptitious method she had taken; *and falling down before him, she* candidly *told him all the truth*; [*and*] *declared to him before all the people*, without any reserve, *for what reason she had* thus *touched him, and how she had been immediately healed* by that touch, of the grievous distemper she had been so many years afflicted with, which no force of medicines could remove or abate. Mark V. 32. Luke VIII. 47.

MAT. IX. 22. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said [unto her,] Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; [go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.] And the woman was made whole from that hour. [MARK V. 34. LUKE VIII. 48.]

But Jesus having thus *turned about and seen her*, instead of reproving her with the severity she expected, *said to her*, in a most gentle and condescending manner, *Daughter, take courage*, and be comforted, for I am not offended with thee: I know the sincerity of *thy faith*, in the regard which thou hast shewn to me, though mingled with some infirmity; and it *has made thee well*, and fitted thee for a cure thou couldest not otherwise have received: and therefore *go* home *in peace* and cheerfulness; for I dismiss thee with my blessing (see note 1 on Luke vii. 50, p. 317,) *and* assure thee thou shalt continue to *be free from* any return of *thy distemper*. *And* accordingly *the woman was* perfectly *well from that hour*, and the malady never returned upon her as long as she lived. Mat. IX. 22.

MARK V. 35. While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house, certain* which said [to him,] Thy daughter is dead: Why troublest thou the Master any further? [trouble him not.] [LUKE VIII. 49.]

In the mean time, *while he was yet speaking* to the woman, [*some*] messengers *came from* [*the house of*] Jairus, *the ruler of the synagogue*, whom we mentioned above: *and* they *said unto him, Thy daughter*, in whose behalf thou art applying to Jesus, *is* now actually *dead*, and consequently beyond the reach of prayer and of help: *why* therefore *dost thou trouble the* great *Master* in our Israel to come *any farther? Do not trouble him* Mark V. 35.

SECT. lxxii.

him[1] to come into the house of mourning, where he can only renew their sorrows by the lateness of his arrival there. *But as soon as Jesus heard*

Mark V. 36. *the word which was spoken* by these messengers in which they related this melancholy news, *he says to the* afflicted *ruler of the synagogue*, Be not discouraged by these mournful tidings; and notwithstanding they have brought thee such a sad account, *be not afraid*, as if there were no hope; *only believe* in the Divine power and goodness operating by me, *and* I will answer for it, that desperate as thy daughter's case may now appear to a human eye, *she shall* still *be recovered*.

Luke VIII 51. *And when he came* to enter *into the ruler's house, he permitted none* of the company *to follow him* in, *except* his three most intimate friends, *Peter, and James, and John the brother of James*, whom he was pleased to distinguish on this, as he did afterwards on other occasions; *and* these with *the father and mother of the* deceased *maiden* were the only persons whom he permitted to be eye-witnesses of the miracles he was about to

52 perform. *And*, as she was an only daughter, *all* their relations and friends who were present *wept* bitterly, *and lamented her: and*, as soon as Jesus was entered, *he saw the tumult and the* crowd of *people who wept and cried out aloud*[k]; *and* there were also *the flute-players*, as usual on such occasions[l], *making a* mournful *noise* with their

36 As soon as heard the wo was spoken, h unto the ruler synagogue, B afraid, only b [and she shall b whole.] [Luke 50.]

Luke VIII. And when he into the [r house, he suffe man [Mark to him, save Pete James and Joh brother of Ja and the father a mother of the m [Mat. IX. Mark V. 37, 5

52 And all and bewailed [Mark and he the tumult, [a people] that we wailed greatly,] the minstrels a noise.] [Mat —23. Mark 38.]

i *Why dost thou trouble the Master any farther? Do not trouble him.*] As several persons came, one might say, *Why dost thou trouble him?* as Mark has it; and another, as Luke, *Do not trouble him.* I am sensible the mention of *both together* is no ornament to the story: and perhaps it might have been as agreeable to our taste and manner had *both* been expressed by saying, *Messengers came, who would have persuaded him not to have given Jesus the trouble of coming*, But I endeavour in this work to give the reader as exact a view as possible of the (very consistent) *varieties* with which *different evangelists* record the *same facts*; and it seems an end considerable enough to excuse some little *inelegancies of style* which the execution of such a design must occasion. This remark is to be applied to many preceding and following passages.

k *Cried out aloud.*] A late *version* renders αλαλαζοντας, *howling*; which is indeed a sense that the *original* will bear, yet it is not always to be so translated: (see xiii. 1. *Gr.*) And as the word *howl* seldom used among us but in the c *brutes*, or where great *contempt* is des I rather chose to drop a little *emphasis* of the *word*, than to shock a passionate reader by so harsh an expre To *lift up the voice in weeping* was cor in the *eastern* countries: see Gen. xx Jud. ii. 4. and I Sam. xxx. 4.

l *The flute players*, as usual on such casions.] It is well known that *music struments* were used by the Jews as w the *heathens* in their *lamentations* fo *dead*, to soothe the melancholy of su ing friends by soft and solemn There were persons who made it business to perform this office, and to to their music. (See Jer. ix. 17. xlviii. 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. and the *notes* of *Dr* and *Wolfius* on this place.) Many observed that *flutes* were used espec on the death of *children*, and larger louder *instruments* on the death of the *a*

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SECT. lxxii.

Mark. V. 39.

their musical instruments, to soothe the grief of the afflicted family. *And when he was come in* to the house, *he says to them, Retire,* and make way that I may see her; [*and*] *do not weep* in this abandoned and inconsolable manner: for *why do you lament, and make* a noise? and where is the need of all *this* hurry and *disturbance? The damsel,* whose departure you so bitterly bewail as if her loss was irretrievable, *is not* finally *dead, but is* fallen *asleep*; and if you have a little patience you shall see her awakened: (by which he intimated that this death should be but like a transient sleep; see John xi. 11, 13, sect. cxxxix.) *And they,* not understanding his true 40
meaning, were so rude that they *derided him,* as if the assertion had been altogether wild and ridiculous, well *knowing that she was* really and certainly *dead. But* he, too wise to enter into a clamorous debate with them, desired them to withdraw; and *when he had put them all out* of the way, *he takes the father and mother of the* deceased *maiden, and those* three disciples *that were with him, and enters in* to the chamber *where the damsel lay* dead. *And,* approaching the bed on 41
which the corpse was laid out, *he took hold of her hand; and,* to express his power over death itself, *called* with a loud voice, *saying to her,* (as if she had indeed been only asleep, *Talitha cumi; which* Syriac expression, *being translated* into our language, *signifies, Maiden, (I say unto thee) rise up. And* he had no sooner spoke these 42
words, but *presently her spirit came back again* to animate the body which it had deserted, *and she* was so perfectly recovered that she *arose and walked,* which she was well able to do, *for she was twelve years old. And,* as the life to which 43
she was restored was not to be supported by a continued miracle, but must have food to nourish it in a natural way, *he ordered that something should be given her to eat;* which on account of her late illness, she had not been able to do for some time.

And her parents, and they [*all*] who were present, *were exceedingly astonished,* as well as filled with joy and gratitude: *but* [*Jesus*] behaved with his usual modesty[m], and *strictly charged them,*

Luke VIII. 56.

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But when he
t them all out,
keth the father
e mother of the
l, and them that
with him, and
th in where the
l was lying.—
. IX.—24, 25.
KE VIII. 53,
]
And he took
by the hand, and
, saying] unto
Talitha, cumi,
is, being inter-
l, Damsel, (I
nto thee,) arise.
E VIII.—54.]
—And straight-
LUKE, her spi-
me again, and
rose, and walk-
or she was *of the*
f twelve years.
T. IX.—25.
VIII. 55.—]
3 And [he] com-
ed that some-
should be given
o eat. [LUKE
—55.]

KE VIII. 56. And
arents [and they
re astonished with
at astonishment:]
but

With his usual modesty.] It is well
the reader's observation, with what perfect decorum *our Lord* conducted himself on this occasion; and how entirely he appears

SECT. lxxii.

them, that they should tell no man the particulars of *what was done,* nor make it their business to blaze abroad an event which would of itself become more public than he would have desired. *And* indeed it soon did so; for such numbers knew that she was really dead, and saw her alive again, that *the fame of it,* as of a most illustrious and extraordinary miracle, *went abroad into all that country;* and, being made the common subject of discourse, greatly increased the reputation he had before acquired by so long a series of wonders that he had wrought among them.

but he charged them [strictly] that they should tell no man what was done. [MARK V. 42, 43.—]

Luke VIII. 56. Mat. IX. 26.

MAT. IX. 26. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

27 *And as Jesus passed on from thence* out of the ruler's house, *Two blind men,* who had heard of his being there, and waited for his coming out, *followed him,* as he went through the street, *crying out,* with great importunity, *and saying, O thou Son of David, have compassion on us* in the miserable darkness that distresses us, and restore to us that precious sight which we have lost.

27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us.

28 *And* he took no notice of them as he walked on; but *when he was come into the house* to which he was going, *the* two *blind men,* by his permission, *came unto him: and Jesus says to them, Do you* indeed seriously *believe that I am able to do this? They say unto him, Yes, Lord,* we have not the least doubt of it. *Then he touched their eyes, and said,* Since you have that persuasion, *be it unto you according to* the sincerity of *your faith.*

28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith, be it unto you.

30 *And* immediately they both found that *their eyes were opened,* and they saw strongly and distinctly. *And Jesus gave them a strict charge, that they* should not report it publicly abroad, and *should tell no man*[n] of the cure they had received. *But* they were so transported at what he had done for them, that *when they were gone out, they* were not able to refrain from publishing the miracle, but immediately began to *spread his fame over all that country.*

30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know *it.*

31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

32 *And* when he had thus cured the two blind men, just *as they went out* of the house where Jesus

32 As they went out, behold, they brought

appears master of himself, and superior to any views of human applause. Dr. *Lardner* has illustrated this with a just and lively spirit of criticism. See his *Answer to Woolston,* p. 89.

[n] *Jesus gave them a strict charge, that they should tell no man.*] Our *version* is more *literal,* but the sense is perfectly the same. I intended the *variation* only as a *specimen* of several of the like kind, which I think might be made in a manner which would better suit the genius of *our language,* though (perhaps through an excess of tenderness) I have not often ventured to take even such *little liberties* as these. See Mr. *Pope's note* on *Homer's Iliad,* Vol. II. Book vi. ver. 605.

It

brought to him a dumb man, possessed with a devil.

33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

34 But the Pharisees said, He casteth out the devils through the prince of the devils.

Jesus was, *behold, they brought to him a dumb person*, who had been for some time deprived of his speech by being *possessed with a demon. And when* by the victorious word of Jesus *the demon was expelled, the* man, who had so long been *dumb, spake* readily and distinctly; *and the multitudes were astonished, saying, It was never seen so*, even *in Israel* itself[o], though it be a people among whom God has wrought such unparalleled wonders. *But the Pharisees* continued their senseless and blasphemous charge against him as a magician; and, not being able to deny facts that were so notorious, in order to prevent the effect which they might have upon the people, they *said, He* certainly *casts out* these inferior *demons by* a wicked confederacy with Beelzebub himself, *the prince of the demons*[p], whose interest gains far more than it loses by dispossessions wrought by such a hand.

sect. lxxii. Mat. IX. 33. 34

IMPROVEMENT.

We have here a scene of complicated wonders, worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance. Any *single story* of this kind might justly move our *admiration;* but when we are reading the *life of Christ*, such a *constellation of miracles* rises, that the number renders us less sensible of the lustre and glory of each.

We may observe in the story of the *distempered woman* a mixture of *weakness* and of *faith*. She could not reasonably think to *steal a cure*, without the knowledge of him by whom it was wrought; or imagine a *charm* in the *garment* that *Christ* wore, which could produce so glorious an effect, independent of his agency and will. Yet she acted as if she had thought thus; and a compassionate *Redeemer* commended her *faith*, and excused her *infirmity*. Such candour should we exercise towards those in whom we find any thing truly valuable; *not despising the day of small things*, but ready to encourage and support the weak, and to commend whatever good we may discover in them.

Mark V. 25, & *seq.* Ver. 28 34

We have already beheld *Christ* frequently giving *sight to the blind*, and *casting out evil spirits:* but we have here a *second instance* of his *power over death*, and behold one under its dominion *hearing*

Luke VIII. 51 & *seq.*

o *It was never seen so, even in Israel itself.*] This reflection was perfectly just; for no one of the *prophets* that we read of in the *Old Testament*, appears to have wrought so many beneficial *miracles* in his *whole life*, as *our Lord* did in this one *afternoon*.

p *He casts out demons by the prince of the demons.*] *Our Lord* had in an unanswerable manner *confuted* this base *calumny* before: (see sect. lxi. p. 320, & *seq.*) Yet they had the assurance to advance it again, without any regard to *that confutation*. Such were the *infidels* of those days, as well as of these.

SECT. lxxii. *ing the voice of the Son of God!* In how majestic, and yet in how gentle a manner, does he address himself to this admirable work! 54 *Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise.* And immediately she *heard* and *obeyed.* Thus shall he, with equal ease, *call forth myriads of his saints,* who now seem *perished in the dust:* and it may be said with 52 regard to them also, in reference to that day, *They are not dead,* 55 *but sleep.* The *maiden,* of whom we here read, *arose* only to a *dying life;* a life which needed the support of *food,* and was in no respect more noble or more secure than that of other mortals: but we look for a *better resurrection,* in which all the infirmities of the body shall be left behind in the grave; and *there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying.* (Rev. xxi. 4.)

Mark V. 39 In expectation of this, let us restrain *immoderate sorrow* when our pious friends are taken away: let us not make *too much ado* on the occasion, nor allow ourselves to be thrown into *a tumult of* passion, even when *our children* are stretched on the *bed of death;* 36 but *believing in Christ,* and governing ourselves by his precepts and maxims, let us in humble *resignation,* and submissive, though mournful *silence,* wait the issues of his providence and grace; since he knows how, as in *this instance,* to over-rule the calamities of our families to the good of our souls, and even to strengthen our *faith* by those exercises, which might seem most likely to overthrow it.

SECT. LXXIII.

Christ renews his visit to Nazareth, where he is again rejected by the inhabitants; and thence takes a circuit through the neighbouring country. Mat. XIII. 54. *to the end.* IX. 35. *to the end.* Mark VI. 1—6.

MARK VI. 1.

SECT. lxxiii. *AND* Jesus, when *he went out from thence*[a], and was departed from Capernaum, where

Mark VI. 1. he had raised the daughter of Jairus *and* performed the other miracles which have just been mentioned, *came* again *into his own country* and town of Nazareth, and there renewed the gracious proclamations which they had several months before so ungratefully rejected; *and his disciples,* as usual, *followed him* thither.

2 *And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue,* as he had formerly done, though

MARK VI. 1.

AND he went out from thence, and came into his own country, and his disciples follow him. [MAT. XIII. 54.—]

2 And when the sabbath-day was come, he began to teach in the

[a] *And he went out from thence.*] These words of Mark do plainly shew, that this *visit to Nazareth* is to be placed here: I say, *to Nazareth,* that being called *his own country,* by way of distinction from the rest of Galilee, and particularly from Capernaum, whence he now went out. See Luke iv. 23, p. 179.

b *And*

the synagogue: and many hearing *him*, were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man [this wisdom, and these mighty works?] and what wisdom *is* this, which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? [MAT. XIII.—54.]

3—Is not this the carpenter? [the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?] [MAT. XIII. 55.]

MAT. XIII. 56. And his sisters, are they not all [here] with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? [MARK VI.—3.—]

57——And they were offended in him. [MARK VI,—3.]

MARK VI. 4. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. MAT. XIII.—57.

though they had then attempted in a tumultuous manner to destroy him on the same occasion: (sect. xxxii. p. 180.) *And many* of his townsmen *hearing him, were struck with amazement and said*, as several had done before [b], *From whence hath this man*, whose birth and education we know, *this wisdom* which he manifests in these excellent discourses, *and* the power of performing *these mighty works? And what* supernatural *wisdom is this which is given to him, that even such* amazing *miracles* as these *are done by his hands? Is not this* Jesus, *the* man who but a while ago wrought among us as a *carpenter* [c], and was *the son of* Joseph *the carpenter?* And *is not his mother*, who is *called Mary*, still living? *And* [*are not*] our neighbours, *James and Joses, and Simon and Judas*, whom we all know and daily converse with, *his brethren* or near kinsmen [d]? *And are not all his sisters*, or kinswomen, *here* at Nazareth *with us?* From *whence then hath this man all these* extraordinary *things* [e] which furnish him for this illustrious character, which he assumes superior to that of the greatest teachers and princes of our nation? *And they were offended in him*, and stumbled at the poverty of his education and family; so that they paid very little regard to what he preached.

But Jesus said unto them, This is indeed a most unreasonable treatment that I meet with from you: but it is obvious, even to a proverb, That *a prophet is no where less esteemed than in his own country, and among his* nearest *relations, even in his own family* [f]; who form their judgment of him

SECT. LXXIII.

MARK VI. 2.

3

MAT. XIII. 56.

57

MARK VI. 4.

b *And said*, as several had done before.] Luke plainly asserts, *that visit to Nazareth* which he mentions, to have been *before* many occurrences which Mark tells us happened before this. It is evident therefore they are *different visits*; nor is there any difficulty in supposing, that some now present, who perhaps had not heard him before, might repeat so natural a reflection as this. Compare Luke iv. 22, p. 178.

c Wrought among us as a *carpenter*.] The Jews tell us, *he made rakes and yokes*. Their *canons* required, that all *parents* should teach their *children* some *trade*; and probably the *poverty* of the family engaged Christ, while he was at home with his parents, to work at his. See *Grotius* on Mat. xiii. 55.

d *His brethren* or near kinsmen.] Whether they were the children of Joseph by a former marriage, or the children of some *brother* or *sister* of Joseph or Mary, is not material. Every one knows, that it was common with the Jews to use the name of *brethren* in a larger sense, and to apply it to *cousins* and near kinsmen, as well as those that were *brethren* in the proper sense of the word.

e *Whence hath this man all these* extraordinary *things?*] This, like many other things which have since been objected against the gospel of Christ, is as much the language of *stupidity* as of *infidelity*; for the meanness of Christ's *education* was a demonstration that his teaching in so excellent a manner must be the effect of some extraordinary divine influence on his mind.

f *A prophet is no where less esteemed*, &c.] This is plainly the sense of the words (though

SECT. LXXIII.

him by the mean appearance which they remember he made formerly in private life, and are regardless therefore of the excellence of his doctrine, and of the plainest evidences of his Divine authority and mission.

Mark VI. 4.

5 *And* this was verified in their conduct to him: for notwithstanding all that he had done in other places, they were so strongly prejudiced against him by the meanness of his outward circumstances, that they were openly regardless of the favour of his presence, and would not come to him for help; for which reason *he could not there* have any opportunity to exercise his power, or to *do any miracle* of note [g], *excepting* only *that he laid his hands upon a few sick people, and cured them*; [*but*] *he did not perform many mighty works* among them, *on account of their unbelief.*

5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*; [*but* did not many mighty works, because of their unbelief.] [MAT. XIII. 58.]

6 *And he wondered at* the continuance of *their infidelity*, especially considering the many additional evidences they had received of his Divine power in his late signal operations.

6—And he marvelled because of their unbelief.

Mat. IX. 35.

And upon this *Jesus* left them [h], and departing from Nazareth *went round about* to *all the* neighbouring *cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the good news of the kingdom* which God was about to erect; *and* wherever he came, he gave abundant testimonials of the truth of his doctrine, by *healing every disease, and every malady among the people.*

MAT. IX. 35. And Jesus went [round] about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness, and every disease among the people. [MARK VI. 6.]

36 *And beholding the multitudes* which flocked around him, *he was moved with* tender *compassion for them, because they were faint* [i] with the fatigue of frequent journeyings, *and exposed* to continual

36 But when he saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion

(though our *translation* is more *literal*:) for a *prophet* may be, and often is, *affronted* at a distance from home; as Christ himself found by frequent experience. (Compare John iv. 44. p. 174, and Luke iv. 24, p. 179.)—I have rendered the last words, *και εν τη οικια αυτου, even in his own family*; as *και* often has such a signification, and here seems most *forcible* if it be so interpreted.

[g] *He could not there do any miracle.*] We are not to understand these words so strictly, as if the power of Christ was here disarmed; but only, that as they brought but *few sick people* to him for a cure, he did not judge it convenient to *obtrude* his miracles upon them, and so *could not honourably* and *properly* perform them. On the same principle it is, that *faith* in some cases, though not in all, is made the condition of receiving a cure: (compare Mark ix. 23; Mat. ix. 28; and Acts xiv. 9.) And Christ saw it proper to make it so here; as he well might, considering what they must undoubtedly have heard of him from other places, and what they had confessed themselves but just before, of *mighty works* being *wrought by his hands*: which shews indeed, that their *unbelief* did not so much consist in a *doubt* of his *miraculous power*, as of his *Divine mission*, which to any unprejudiced person's mind *that power* so abundantly proved. In this view therefore it is hard to say, how he *could with honour* and *decency* have lavished away his favours on so unworthy a people.

[h] *Jesus* left them.] So far as we can learn from the *gospel history*, he never after this returned any more to *Nazareth*.

[i] *Faint*

sion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few:

38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

continual danger [i], *as sheep that had no shepherd* to feed them with spiritual food, or to watch for the safety and edification of their souls. *Then*, as he intended immediately after this to send out his twelve apostles, *he says to* them and *his* other *disciples*, to quicken their devotion and zeal, *The harvest* of souls to be gathered in *is indeed great, but the* faithful *labourers* who assist in it *are few:* And *therefore* let me urge you to *make your* importunate *supplications to the* great *Lord* and Master *of the harvest, that he would* by the secret but powerful energy of his spirit on men's hearts, conquer their natural disinclination to this excellent work, and so *thrust forth* a sufficient number of active indefatigable *labourers into his harvest* [k], by whom it may successfully be carried on, to his own greater glory, and the edification and salvation of souls.

SECT. lxxiii.

Mat. IX. 37.

38

IMPROVEMENT.

SINCE the blessed *Jesus* vouchsafed to *renew his visit* to *Nazareth*, where they had attempted to murder him on his first preaching among them, let us *not be weary of well-doing*, nor refuse to *renew our attempts* on the most obstinate sinners, where the interests of their immortal souls are concerned. Mark VI. 1.

But though they were *astonished* at *his wisdom*, and could not but allow *the mighty works* that he had wrought; yet these ungrateful creatures went on to reject him, and in so doing were *condemned out of their own mouth:* nor can we be at any loss for instances of those who in later ages have fallen under the *like condemnation.* 2

He is spoken of as *the carpenter;* which intimates that he once wrought at that mean employment. What amazing condescension was this in the *Son of God*, and the *Heir of all things, by whom also the worlds were made!* (Heb. i. 2.) Yet surely while the *hands of Christ* were employed in these daily labours, *his soul* was rising in holy 3

[i] *Faint and exposed.*] Though the learned Elsner has taken a great deal of pains to prove in his *note* on this text, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 49, 50) that σκυλλομενοι signifies *scattered*, or *wandering;* yet I still chuse to render it, *they were faint;* which sense of the word is sufficiently vindicated by *Wolfius, (in loc.)* and *Albert*, (*Observ.* p. 76, 77), and is established by the use of it in other places of the *New Testament.* Compare Mat. xv. 32; Mark viii. 3; Gal. vi. 9; and Heb. xii. 3, 5.—But I think Elsner has advanced enough to justify the rendering of ἐρριμμενοι, *exposed* to every invading danger, as *sheep are* when *thrown up* or *abandoned* by their *shepherd.*

[k] *Thrust forth labourers into his harvest*] The word ἐκβαλῃ so plainly imports this, that I am sorry I retained our less emphatical *translation* in the *first edition.* Whoever considers the immense difficulties and oppositions with which every *minister of Christ's* kingdom was sure to encounter in those early days of it, will see the necessity of some unusual *energy* and impulse on the mind to lead any to undertake it.

a *Having*

SECT. LXXIII.

holy contemplations and devout affections. So may we intermingle *pious meditations* with our *secular cares*, and have *our conversation in heaven*, while our *dwelling* is *on earth!*

Mark VI. 5. How much did these *Nazarenes* lose by their obstinate prejudices against *Jesus!* How many *diseased bodies* might have been cured, how many *lost souls* might have been recovered and saved, had they given him a better reception! May Divine Grace deliver us from that *unbelief*, which does as it were *disarm Christ himself*, and render him a *savour of death*, rather than *of life*, to our souls!

Mat. IX. 35 Still he continued his gracious labours, and, when *rejected in one city*, went and *preached in another;* still surrounded with a *crowd* of admirers, whom he viewed with *tender regard.* Let his 36 *ministers*, learn of him, tenderly to *pity* those, who are *faint and exposed* to danger, and are *as sheep having no shepherd.* The extreme *necessities* of his *churches* in many places are but too appa- 37 rent: let us earnestly *pray*, that *God* would behold them with *compassion;* that he would graciously provide for their instruction, 38 and would *thrust forth* such *labourers* among them as may be diligent and faithful in their work, and prove the happy instruments of *gathering in fruit to everlasting life.* (John iv. 36.)

SECT. LXXIV.

Our Lord sends forth his apostles with a commission, and gives them instructions to preach the gospel. Mat. X. 1—15. Mark VI. 7—11. Luke IX. 1—5.

MAT. X. 1.

SECT. LXXIV. Mat. X. 1. *AND* Jesus *having called his twelve disciples together*[a], whom (it has been observed before, Luke vi. 13, p. 280.) he had chosen some time since to be his constant followers and attendants, and who were named apostles from their mission; *he* endowed them with the gift of working miracles, and *gave them power and authority over all* kinds of *demons*, [*or*] *unclean spirits, to cast them out* of those unhappy persons whom they had possessed, *and to cure every distemper, and every malady*, how malignant and dangerous soever.

2 *Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first* of them, who was one of the most early followers

MAT. X. 1.

AND when he had called [LUKE, together] unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power [LUKE, and authority over all devils or] unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease. [MARK VI. 7. —LUKE IX. 1.]

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon,

[a] *Having called his twelve disciples together.*] There can be no room to doubt that this is the *proper place* of the *mission of the apostles*, considering its *connection* with the preceding stories in all the *evangelists* that mention it.

[b] *The*

Mat. X. 2.

Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother;

followers of Christ, and the first that was called to a stated attendance upon him (p. 184), and whose remarkable zeal and piety rendered him a kind of leader among them, was *Simon, who is also called Peter*[b], as Christ had honoured him with that sirname, (see John i. 42, p. 125): *and Andrew his brother*, who was called the same day with him: *James [the son] of Zebedee* the fisherman, *and John his brother*, that beloved disciple; who were also called at the same time with the two former, as they were fishing at the sea of Galilee, (p. 185): *Philip* of Bethsaida, *and Bartholomew: Thomas* called Didymus; *and Matthew*, who had been *the publican: James [the son] of Alpheus; and Lebbeus, whose sirname was Thaddeus*, and who was also called Judas or Jude, the brother of James: *Simon the Canaanite*, a native of Cana[c]; *and Judas Iscariot*, or a man of Carioth, that wicked and miserable creature, *who* afterwards *even betrayed him*, and then laid violent hands on himself.

3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the son* of Alpheus, and Lebbeus, whose sirname was Thaddeus;

4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

These twelve disciples *Jesus sent forth by two and two* in pairs[d], that they might be agreeable companions and assistants to each other in their work; *and* he *commanded them* to go into those places which he himself purposed shortly to visit[e]; and *to preach* there the gospel of *the kingdom of God*, or to proclaim the joyful tidings of the approaching kingdom of the Messiah; *and*,

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth [by two and two] and commanded them [LUKE, to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick,]

b *The first, Simon, who is called Peter.*] The reasons assigned in the *paraphrase* are so apparently sufficient to account for Peter's being named *first*, that it is strange any should have attempted to prove from *this text* the *authority of Peter* over his brethren, when we never find it declared by Christ, or claimed by Peter, or owned by any of the rest of the *apostles*, but rather find so many *scriptures* which appear to look a contrary way. See Mat. xxiii. 8—12. Acts xv. 13, *&c. seq.* 2 Cor. xii. 11. and Gal. ii. 11.

c *Simon the Canaanite*, a native of Cana.] The reader may see an illustration of *this title* and that of *Lebbeus*, sect. lii. p. 282, *notes* f and g.

d *By two and two.*] It is obvious this would conduce to the *confirming* of their *testimony*, as in *the mouth of two witnesses every word is established* (Mat. xviii 16.) as well as make their *mission* much more *comfortable* than if each had been sent alone. Mr. Fleming has taken pains to shew, that there was great wisdom in joining them together in such *pairs* as are here intimated, on account of the *resemblance* or *contrast* of their characters. The discourse is very ingenious; but the memoirs of some of the *apostles* are so short, that much of it is uncertain conjecture, rather than convincing argument. See *Fleming's Christol.* Vol. II. p. 167, *&c. seq.*

e Which he himself purposed shortly to visit.] *Our Lord* was now entering at least on the *third year* of his *ministry*, and therefore purposed to take a *larger tour* than he had formerly done; concluding, that the *fame* of so many *miracles* would make way for his being heard with greater regard than before. (Compare sect. xxxi. p. 172, and sect. xxxvi. p. 194.) The *time* they had spent *with him* in an immediate attendance on his ministry, since their *first call* to the work, would no doubt conduce much to their *fitness* for it; and the *notice* taken of them by multitudes who had often seen them near Jesus would promote their *acceptance* in it. See Mark iii. 13, 14, p. 281.

SECT. lxxiv.

Mat. X. 5.

and, in confirmation of it, *to heal the sick*, and exert the other miraculous powers which he had given them. And upon this occasion he made an excellent discourse to them, *saying*, In this circuit which I now send you, *do not go into the way of the Gentiles*; for the glad tidings of the gospel are not yet sent to them: *nor enter into* [*any*] *city of the Samaritans*, if you should be obliged to pass through their country; though I once did it, and preached among them with considerable success. (See John iv. 40, 41, 6 sect. xxx.) *But* my message is chiefly to be delivered to the Jews (compare Mat. xv. 24. and Rom. xv. 8): and therefore *go ye rather to* them, *the* poor *lost sheep of the house of Israel*, who are generally wandering in the paths of error and sin; yet they shall receive this farther token of my regard, that the first notices of my 7 kingdom shall be sent to them. *And as ye go* from one place to another, wherever you come, *proclaim* this good news, *saying*, with that ardour and zeal which becomes my heralds [f], *The* long expected *kingdom of heaven is approaching*; prepare yourselves therefore to re- 8 ceive the blessings of it. And that a declaration of so great importance may not want suitable testimonials, and the meanness of your personal appearance may not render the truth of it suspected (as any proper occasion offers), *heal the sick*, *cleanse the lepers*, yea, *raise the dead* [g], and *cast out demons*: for such a power I have given to you, and see that you exert it in a manner most honourable to yourselves and me; [*and as*] *you have received* it *freely*, *freely give* unto others the assistance which it enables you to impart, and scorn the thought of making any gain of those for whom these works of mercy and power are performed.

Mark VI. 8

And he commanded them, that they should take nothing for [*their*] *journey, except only a staff*; which

sick,] saying, into the way Gentiles, and i city of the Sam enter ye not: [VI.—7. LUKE

6 But go ra the lost sheep house of Israel.

7 And as y preach, saying, kingdom of hea at hand.

8 Heal the cleanse the l raise the dead, out devils; free have received, give.

MARK VI. 8. *he* commandeth that they should nothing for *their* ney, save a staff [L

[f] *Proclaim*—with that ardour and zeal which becomes my heralds.] This is the proper import of the word κηρυσσειν, which is derived from κηρυξ, *a herald*. Probably they were to make this *proclamation* with a *loud voice* as they passed through the streets of the towns they went to; as *Jonah* delivered his message to *Nineveh*. See Jonah iii. 4.

[g] *Raise the dead.*] Though many *ancient copies* have not *this clause*, and though we do not find that the *apostles* exerted *such power* whilst Christ lived; yet the *oldest versions* have it, and it is cert much easier to *drop* than to *insert* a c by accident, I chuse, with Dr. Wh to retain it, though there are great au rities on the other side. It is to me evident that some passages in *this dis* refer to events which did not immed take place. See Mat. x. 18, 21, 2 the next section.

[LUKE, and he said unto them,] [Provide] no bread, no money, [neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses;] [MAT. X. 9. LUKE IX. 3.—]

which they had in their hands[h]: *and*, to prevent any solicitude as to the means of their support, *he said unto them*, Disburden yourselves of all anxious cares on this occasion, and *provide neither bread*, or any other kind of food for your subsistence, *nor money* to purchase provisions; *neither gold*, *nor silver*, *nor brass* coin, *in your purses*[i]: *Nor* even take so much as *a scrip* to carry any manner of provisions *for* [*your*] *journey*; *nor* think it needful you should have *two coats a piece*, or any change of raiment; *nor*, what might seem more necessary still, even another pair of *shoes*, any stronger than ordinary, *but be shod* just as you are *with sandals*[k]; *nor yet* take any *staves*, but only those that you are used to walk with. *For the labourer is* surely *worthy of his food:* and as you may freely accept the necessary supplies of life when offered by those to whom you preach, so you may cheerfully trust the Providence of God to take care of you while engaged in so good a cause; and he would rather support you by a miracle, than suffer you to want what shall be necessary for your sustenance[l].

SECT. lxxiv.

Mark VI. 8.

MAT. X. 10. Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats [LUKE, a piece,] neither shoes, [but be shod with sandals,] nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.—[MARK VI. 9. LUKE IX.—3.]

Mat. X. 10.

11 And [he said unto them,] Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who

And he farther *said unto them*, Go forth therefore with a holy alacrity; and *into whatever city or village you enter*, make it your first business to *enquire who in it is* of a *worthy* character for hospitality

11

h *Except only a staff*, which they had in their hands.] There is no difficulty thus to *reconcile this clause* with what is said in Matthew (ver. 10), that they should *not provide a staff* (as it is there expressed in the *original*, μηδὲ ῥάβδον); for many *copies* read it in the *plural number*, μηδὲ ῥάβδους, *nor yet staves*; which *reading* is confirmed by Luke (ver. 3), where it is so expressed. Nor is there any need we should suppose, with Heinsius, that α is put for αι, here in Mark, as if they were commanded to *take nothing* with them, *not even so much as a staff*. For all that *Christ* intended was, that they should so entirely depend upon the providence of God, that they should set out with *nothing* but *the staff* in their hands; and that, however common it might be for those who were to travel a long way to be provided with *two staves* as well as with *two coats*, they need not be solicitous to have *another* ready in case *one* should fail.

i *In your purses.*] The *original* word, ζωναις, expresses the custom they had of carrying *money* in a kind of *fob-pocket*, or *purse*, which was made in the duplicature of their *girdles*. See Dr. *Shaw's Travels*, p. 292.

k *Nor shoes, but be shod with sandals.*] I apprehend the word υποδηματα, *shoes*, must here signify a kind of *short boots*, which they used in long journeys, that covered the whole foot and small of the leg; whereas their *sandals* were pieces of strong *leather*, or *wood*, tied under the sole of the foot by strings, and something resembling modern *clogs*. See *Calmet's Dictionary*, Vol. II. p. 615, on the word *sandals*; and *Lightfoot's Hor. Heb.* on Mat. x. 10.

l He would rather support you by a miracle, &c.] *Our Lord* intended this *mission* in part, as an initiation into their *apostolic work*; and it was, no doubt, an encouragement to them during all the remainder of life to recollect the singular care which *Providence* now took of them, though they had abandoned their families, and with them the means of subsistence, and went out wholly unfurnished for such an expedition. In this view Christ leads them to recollect it, Luke xxii. 35, sect. clxxiii.

SECT. lxxiv.

hospitality and piety; for I would not have you endanger your own reputation, by taking up your lodging in any disreputable family: *And whatever house you* thus *enter into, continue there till you leave the place;* that you may not seem to have too great a regard to the little circumstances of domestic accommodation, which it is beneath your character as my ministers to be very solicitous about.

Mat. X. 11.

who in it is worthy; and [LUKE, whatsoever house ye enter into,] there abide, [till ye depart from that place.]—[MARK VI. 10. LUKE IX. 4.]

12 *And,* as an early intimation of the friendly intention of your visit, *when you* first *enter into any family, salute it* in a courteous and religious manner, saying, according to the usual custom of friends when they enter the dwellings of each other, "Peace be upon this house[m]." *And if the family be worthy* the Divine regard, *your good* wishes for its *peace* and prosperity *shall come upon it*[n], and I will make the blessing that you pronounce effectual: *but if it be not worthy,* even then *your* kind wishes for its *peace* and happiness shall not be lost, but *shall return unto you* in blessings on your own heads, as being the genuine workings of that pious and benevolent temper which God always approves and rewards.

12 And when ye come into an house, salute it:

13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 *And whosoever shall not receive you, nor* in an obedient manner *hearken to your words;* as for such unhappy persons, *when you come out of that house or city* in which they dwell, *shake off the very dust of your feet, as a testimony against them*[o], or as a token that you look upon them as devoted by God to destruction, and therefore desire to separate yourselves entirely from them, that you may not be partakers of their plagues. (Compare Rev. xviii. 4, and Acts xviii. 6.)

14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words; when ye depart out of that house, or city, shake off the [LUKE, very] dust of your feet, [for a testimony against them.] [MARK VI. 11.—LUKE IX. 5.]

15 And indeed you have reason to do it: for *verily I say unto you,* That whatever profession they

15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable

m Peace be upon this house.] This custom of *saluting friends* after this manner is still retained among the Turks and other eastern nations; and I thought it not improper to express it for the illustration of what follows.

n *Your peace shall come upon it.*] This is one of those many passages in which (as the *grammarians* speak) the *imperative* is put for the *future;* that is, *Let it come,* for *It shall come:* (so 1 Cor. xvi. 22.) And perhaps many seeming *imprecations* in the *Old Testament* may most easily be accounted for, by such an explication, as *prophetic predictions* of what should happen to the enemies of God and his people.

o *Shake off the very dust of your feet, &c.*] The Jews thought there was something of so peculiar an *holiness* in the *land of Israel,* that when they came home from any *heathen country* they stopped at its borders and wiped the dust of it from their shoes, that the sacred inheritance might not be *polluted* with it; nor would they permit *herbs* to be brought to them from their neighbours, lest they should bring any of the *dust* of their land upon them. So that the action enjoined to the *apostles* here was a lively intimation, that when the *Jews* had *rejected the gospel,* they were no longer to be regarded as the *people of God,* but were on a level with *heathens* and *idolators.* See Mr. *Fleming's Christol.* Vol. II. p. 160.

tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city. [MARK VI. 11.]

they may make of their regard to the true God, and however they may continue to boast of their national privileges, *it shall be more tolerable* not only for the generality of Gentile sinners, *in the day of* final *judgment*, but even *for* the natives of *the land of Sodom and Gomorrah*, those monsters of unnatural wickedness who were consumed with fire and brimstone from heaven, *than for* the inhabitants of *that* wretched *city*; for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah never sinned against such extraordinary light and such singular favours as they. SECT. LXXIV. Mat. X. 15.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT abundant reason is there for humble thankfulness that the *ambassadors of Christ* were thus *sent forth to preach the gospel*, and that at length their *number* was increased, and their *commission* enlarged; so that instead of their being thus confined to the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*, *their* instructive *line is gone out through all the earth, and their words* have resounded even *to the end of the world*; (Psal. xix. 4) May the purport of their message be seriously attended to! since it will so certainly be *a savour of life* or *of death*, of eternal *salvation* or aggravated *condemnation* and ruin. Mat. X. 1. 5, 6.

Let us tremble to think, that *it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment* than for *those* by whom the *gospel is rejected*: and let us earnestly pray that Divine Grace may enable us to *receive it in the love of it*, and to obey *the truth, that we may be saved*; (2 Thess. ii. 10.) 15

They who have the honour in this respect to succeed the *apostles* as *ministers* of this *gospel*, may learn most useful instructions from this discourse of our *Divine Master*. Let them speak and act as the *messengers of peace* and the friends of mankind, who cordially wish well to all around them; and gratefully acknowledge the kindness which, as faithful *labourers*, they have justly *deserved*. 12, 13 10

Let them shew a true greatness of mind in an apparent superiority to *temporal interests* and present gratifications; *easy* in whatever accommodations they find where *Providence* leads them; and forgetting themselves, to remember their *Master*, and the *souls* he has committed to their care.

Let them faithfully *warn* all around them of the importance of their *eternal concerns*, and of the unutterable danger of *receiving the grace of God in vain*, that, *whether men will hear or forbear*, they may be *clean from their blood*. And, while we preserve such a temper and conduct, we may cheerfully hope that *God will be with us* in the way that we go, and, how *precarious* soever our *circumstances* may seem, will give us *food to eat, and raiment to put on*. 9, &c.

May

SECT. LXXIV. May we all have *this token for good*, that God will take care of *our interests*; even the *consciousness* of our being faithfully engaged to promote his glory, and our joyful *readiness* to *spend and be spent* for the service of souls! (2 Cor. xii. 15.)

SECT. LXXV.

Our Lord faithfully warns his apostles of the danger and opposition they might expect to encounter in his service. Mat. X. 16—28.

MAT. X. 16.

SECT. LXXV.

Mat. X. 16. WHEN our Lord had thus instructed his apostles as to their behaviour and office in general, he went on faithfully to lay before them the difficulties and trials they were to expect in the execution of it; and added, *Behold, I send you out as* so many innocent and defenceless *sheep, in the midst of* a whole multitude of fierce and ravenous *wolves*[a], who will not fail to watch every opportunity to attack and even devour you: *be ye therefore* continually on your guard against them, and labour to approve yourselves *prudent as serpents*, in avoiding unnecessary dangers[b]; but far from imitating the malignity and revengeful nature of that animal, maintain at all times a holy simplicity of soul, *and* be *harmless* and inoffensive *as doves*, those gentle creatures

17 who are innocent and loving to a proverb. *But be upon your guard against* the *men* of the world with whom you converse, that you do not by any inadvertency give them advantage against you: *for they will* seek occasions of mischief, and *betray you to the councils*, and deliver you up to the sanhedrim and other inferior courts of judicature, *and will* also *scourge you in their synago-*

18 *gues*[c]. *And*, in some cases, the persecution shall be carried yet farther; for *you shall be brought before governors and kings on my account*[d], *for a witness*

MAT. X. 16.

BEHOLD, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

17 But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues:

18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake,

[a] *As sheep in the midst of wolves.*] So frankly did *our Lord* warn *his apostles* of the hardships and dangers with which they should be surrounded. Nothing could be more fair; nothing more generous.

[b] *Prudent as serpents.*] Pliny has given us some very remarkable stories of the *sagacity* of *serpents*, some of which, I confess, have the air of *fables*: (see *Plin. Nat. Hist.* lib. viii. cap. 25, 27.) But it is certain there is a peculiar *vivacity* in their eyes; so that *to be as sharp-sighted as a serpent* was a *proverb* both among the Greeks and Romans. See *Erasm. Adag.* p. 580.

[c] *Scourge you in their synagogues.*] Compare Mat. xxiii. 34. and Acts xxii. 19. This is a sort of discipline which has long since been used in their *synagogues*, where they keep their *courts*; and which the wretched Acosta tells us he himself underwent. See *Acost. de Vit. Hum. ad fin. Limborch Coll.* p. 349; *Wits. Vit. Pauli*, sect. 1, § 19—21; and *Vitring. de Synagog. Vet.* lib. iii. par. 1, cap. 11.

[d] *Before governors and kings, &c.*] Accordingly

sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how, or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

20 For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death.

22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he

witness to them, and to the heathen, as this will give you an opportunity of testifying my gospel more solemnly both to Jews and Gentiles. SECT. lxxv. Mat. X. 19.

But when they shall accuse you with the utmost virulence, and *deliver you up* to appear before such high personages, *be not* anxiously *solicitous* about your defence there, *how* you shall answer for yourselves, *or what you shall speak:* but cheerfully throw yourselves upon the Divine assistance which shall be abundantly sufficient for you; *for it shall be given you in that very hour what you shall speak;* proper thoughts and words shall be suggested to you, and your minds shall be maintained in that composure and dignity which is necessary for the honour of the cause you assert[c]. *For* indeed, when you appear on these occasions, and are called to answer for yourselves, *it is not* [*so much*] *you that speak, as the spirit of your Father that speaketh in you*, in defence of that gospel which it is his peculiar office to promote in the world. 20

Nevertheless, all the wisdom and justice of your apologies, though divinely inspired, will not disarm the malice of your unreasonable enemies, which shall prevail to such a degree as even to triumph over natural affection, *and* break asunder the strictest bonds of social life: for *one brother shall betray another*, not only to some slighter punishment, but even *to* a violent and tormenting *death; and the father* shall thus become the murderer, instead of the guardian and protector of *the son; and children*, on the other hand, forgetting all the obligations of filial duty and affection, *shall rise up* as witnesses *against their* own *parents, and cause them to be put to death. And you*, my apostles, notwithstanding all the humanity of your character, and the benevolent design of your office, *shall be* the objects of such general aversion, censure and persecution, that you shall in a manner be *hated of all men* 21 22

cordingly the *apostles* were several of them obliged to appear before *princes*, and were severely prosecuted by their malicious enemies before Herod, Agrippa, Felix, Festus, Nero, Domitian, &c. as we learn from *sacred* or *profane history*.

[c] For the honour of the cause you assert.] Persons of so low an education as the *apostles* generally were, might have been much *terrified* at the thought of appearing before such great personages; and might have feared, lest, in the hurry of their spirits, they should have been betrayed into any *impropriety* of language or behaviour, by which the *cause of the gospel* might have suffered: so that nothing could have been more suitable than the *promise* which *our Lord* here makes them, which was sufficient to prevent a thousand anxious apprehensions.

[f] You

SECT. lxxv.

men for the sake of my name[f]; when your calling yourselves by it shall appear, to your enemies themselves, the only crime chargeable upon you: *but* be not discouraged at these trials; for *he that* courageously *endures to the end, shall* on the whole *be saved;* and whatever extremities he may suffer in this world, God will not only deliver him from the destruction that shall come upon the wicked, but will amply repay his fidelity in the next. (Compare Mat. xxiv. 13. and Rev. ii. 10.)

he that endureth to the end, shall be saved.

Mat. X. 22.

23 *But* I say not this to encourage you to rush upon martyrdom, before you have a plain and lawful call to it: for, on the other hand, it will rather be your duty to prolong such useful lives to the utmost limits you lawfully may, and *when they persecute you in one city,* to *flee to another:* and though this may contract the time of your abode in each, be not disoouraged at that, which may, on the whole, be no inconvenience; *for verily I say unto you, You shall not* have had time to *finish* [*your progress through*] all *the cities of Israel,* and to preach the gospel in every place, *until the Son of man shall come*[g] in a yet more awful appearance, to fulfil your prediction concerning the manifestation of his kingdom and to take vengeance on your cruel persecutors.

23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

24 And as for the unkind usage I have warned you to expect, you have no reason to be surprised at it; for, as I have formerly observed (Luke vi. 40, sect. liv). *The disciple is not above his teacher, nor the servant above his lord: It is* abundantly *sufficient, if the disciple be as his teacher*

24 The disciple is not above *his* master, nor the servant above his lord:

25 It is enough for the disciple, that he be as his master and the servant

[f] *You shall be hated of all men for the sake of my name.*] They who believed the testimony of the *apostles,* as multitudes did, could not but ardently *love them,* as their *fathers in Christ:* (see Gal. iv. 15.) This therefore is plainly one of those many *scriptures* in which the universal term *all* is to be taken with great *restrictions.* See John xii. 32. Phil. ii. 21. and Rom. v. 18.—As there seems in this text a peculiar *emphasis* in the phrase, *for the sake of my name,* I chuse in *this edition* to render it more *literally* than in the *first;* though (as I had there observed) it is apparent that *the name* of a person is sometimes put for *the person* himself. See *note* 1 on John ii. 23. sect. xxiv.

[g] *Until the Son of man shall come.*] I do not find that the *apostles* met with any *persecution* in this *first progress,* from which they soon returned to Christ, and told him all that they had done, (see Mark vi. 30. and Luke ix. 10. sect. lxxviii.) and therefore, as well as for many other reasons, I cannot understand *the coming of the Son of man* to signify *his overtaking them* in this journey before they came to the *end* of it: nor does it appear natural, with Dr. Sykes (in his *Essay on the Truth of Christianity,* p. 85, *& seq.*) to refer it to *Christ's coming to judgment.* It is rather, as Mr. Whiston observes (in his discourse of *Prophecy,* p. 63), to be explained of their being *driven* out of Judea by *persecution,* so that they had not time to visit all the parts of it *before the destruction of Jerusalem* by Titus, which is often called *the coming of the Son of man.* See Mat. xxiv. 27, 37, 39, 44. and Luke xviii. 8.

[h] *Cannot*

servant as his lord: if they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *shall they call* them of his houshold?

teacher, and the servant as his lord, and in such a circumstance the disciple and the servant have cause for thankfulness rather than complaint. *If* then, as you have already heard and found, *they have called* me, who am *the Master of the family, Beelzebub*, and reviled me as a magician, whom they should have received as the Messiah (see p. 321), *how much more* will they be likely thus to abuse *his domestics*, whose character and station are so much inferior to his? SECT. lxxv. Mat. X. 25.

26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

Since *therefore* you have my example before you, and suffer in my cause, *fear them not*, but courageously sustain the utmost efforts of their rage; and assure yourselves that I will support you till you have finished your testimony: *for there is nothing* now *hid, which shall not be revealed: nor* has any thing passed in *secret* between us *which shall not be* universally *made known*. See to it then, that you remember to what purpose I have admitted you to so great an intimacy with me, and discoursed so largely concerning my kingdom; and *what I say to you in darkness, speak* [*it*] *in the light* of open day; *and what you hear* as it were whispered *in the ear, proclaim* publicly with a loud voice as *from the house-tops*. 26 27

27 What I tell you in darkness, *that* speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the house-tops.

28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

And though the boldness of your testimony may indeed at length cost you your lives, yet *be not afraid of them who* can only *kill the* mortal *body, and cannot kill* or hurt *the* immaterial *soul*, which will still survive in all its vigour while its tabernacle lies in ruins[h]; *but* much *rather fear*, lest, by being unfaithful in so important a trust, you should incur the displeasure of *him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*, and has power to fill the separate spirit with anguish, or at the final judgment to re-unite it to the body, and condemn both to everlasting misery in that infernal prison. 28

IMPROVE-

h *Cannot kill the soul, &c.*] I have *paraphrased* the words so, as to illustrate the certain argument they contain to prove the *existence* of the *soul* in a *separate state*, and its *perception* of that existence; else the *soul* would be as properly *killed* as the *body*. Grotius has an excellent *note* here.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. LXXV. How apparently fit is it, that this eternal and almighty *God* should be the object of our humble *fear*, and that in comparison with him we should *fear nothing else!* All the *terrors* of the world are disarmed by this; and by this are its *flatteries* also disarmed. In whatever stations of life we are fixed, let this engage us to be faithful to God in them: so shall we be most truly faithful to ourselves!

Mat. X. 28.

The *apostles* were exposed to peculiar *dangers* and *trials;* but *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus* must expect some degree of *persecution,* (2 Tim. iii. 12.) let us therefore *arm ourselves with the same mind,* that we may bear it with a truly Christian forti-
16 tude. May Divine grace teach us to mingle the *wisdom of the serpent* with the *innocence of the dove,* and to shelter ourselves from the ill usage of a perverse and sinful generation, so far only as we can do it without offering any violation to our consciences!

21 It is indeed matter of great lamentation, that the sentiments of *benevolence* and *goodness,* which seem so natural to the human mind, and are always so ornamental and delightful, should prevail no more: and it is shameful that the *name of religion,* so well calculated to cultivate *these sentiments,* should be made use of as an engine to destroy them; and instead of cementing *kingdoms* and *families* in closer and more affectionate bonds, should inspire them even with mortal animosity. Let us bless God for our public liberties; and earnestly pray, that where *persecution* reigns in its utmost terror, *the wrath of man* may *praise him,* and *the remainder of* that *wrath* be *restrained!* (Psal. lxxvi. 10.)

24, 25 The *ill usage* which the blessed *Jesus* endured from an ungrateful world, may surely prevent our being surprised or offended, if we meet with some share of it too. May we be willing to *suffer with him,* that we may at length *reign with him!* (2 Tim. ii. 12.) And if by unexpected revolutions in providence we should be called out to the severest trials, may *the spirit of glory and of God rest upon us!* and may we *not account* even *our lives dear unto us,* that, approving our fidelity to him, we may *finish our course with joy!* (1 Pet. iv. 14. and Acts xx. 24.)

SECT.

SECT. LXXVI.

Our Lord concludes his charge to his apostles with an assurance of God's providential care for their encouragement; and, with a promise of abundant future rewards to all that should faithfully serve him, or assist others in his work: and, after this, they separate from one another, and go to different parts to preach the gospel. Mat. X. 29. *to the end.* XI. 1. Mark VI. 12, 13. Luke IX. 6.

MAT. X. 29.

ARE not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

MAT. X. 29.

SECT. LXXVI.

AFTER these faithful warnings of the dangers to which the apostles would be exposed in his service, our Lord went on to lay before them such encouragements as might animate their courage and pious zeal; and began with reminding them of the universal extent of the Divine Providence: *are not two* young *sparrows*, said he, *sold for a* single *farthing? yet* there is *not one of them* that by any accident *shall fall to the ground* and die *without* the observation and permission of *your* heavenly *Father*[a]. *And* not only are the more noble and vital parts of your animal frame regarded by God, but *even the* very *hairs of your head are all numbered* by him. *Fear not, therefore*, that you should be overlooked; for, even as men, and especially as my servants and ambassadors, *you are more valuable than many sparrows*, or than the whole species of them; and therefore may assure yourselves that providence will watch over you. Mat. X. 29.

30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

30

31 Fear ye not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

31

And let it be a farther encouragement to you to remember, that whatever you may now suffer for your fidelity to me, it will on the whole be most amply rewarded; for the regard that every one expresses to me here, shall be publicly remembered

32 Whosoever therefore shall confesss me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

32

a *Not one of them shall fall to the ground, &c.*] Some have supposed, there is a reference here to the *two birds* which made a part of the *leper's offering*. (Lev. xiv. 4—7.) As if the sense of what *our Lord* expresses were, that *providence* determines, which of those *two* insignificant animals shall *live*, and which be *killed*. But as the words are capable of a more extensive sense, and *our Lord* elsewhere mentions *five sparrows* just to the same purpose, (Luke xii. 6. sect. cxi.) I see no reason for *paraphrasing* them with any particular view to *that rite*. They are a full proof of the *universality* of the *Divine Providence*; but the singular interpositions of it in favour of good men, may in a much more convincing manner be argued from the *prayers* and *praises* offered in *scripture* with regard to particular events, and the *promises of temporal blessings* made to those that fear and serve God. Nor can I think we are much concerned to determine how far any of these are *miraculous*, and how far the result of *general laws* settled in an exact congruity to the temper and conduct of every individual affected by them, which an omniscient God foresaw, and which his perfect schemes might easily provide for, by methods to us unsearchable. It is plain, Homer thought *Divine Providence* interested itself in the *lives of brute animals*. See *Iliad* lib. xv. ver. 274. See also *Grotius, in loc.*

SECT. lxxvi.

membered and acknowledged hereafter: *whosoever, therefore, shall* courageously *confess me before men*, be he ever so mean in the eyes of the
Mat. X. 32. world, *I also will* not fail to *confess him* in all the glories of my final appearance, not only *before* the assembled world, but even in the immediate presence of *my Father in heaven*, to whose everlasting favour all my faithful servants
33 shall be introduced: *But whosoever shall renounce me before men*, as ashamed or afraid to acknowledge his relation to me, *I will also renounce him before my Father in heaven* as a mean and unworthy creature, who has forfeited all claim to my patronage and favour in that awful day.

33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

34 But, to prevent the mistaken expectations which the apostles might form of the immediate temporal prosperity of his kingdom, our Lord farther added, *Do not suppose that I am come to send* and establish *peace on the land* in which we dwell;[b] for, though the general purport of my gospel has so powerful a tendency to promote it, yet the prejudices and lusts of men will so oppose and pervert it, that it will rather seem, from the event of it, that *I came not to send peace, but a*
35 *sword. For* a few will indeed embrace it; but they will be so cruelly persecuted even by their nearest relations, that I may say, *I am come to set a man at variance against his* own *father, and the daughter against her* own *mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law*[c], when the circumstances of the family were such, that

34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law:

b *To send peace on the land* in which we dwell.] That the word γη often signifies *some particular land*, and especially *Judea*, rather than the *whole earth*, is undeniably plain; (compare Mat. xxiii. 35. and Luke iv. 25.) And I have given it that turn here, because there was no part of the world where *Christianity* occasioned so much *dissension*, and none where *peace* was so much expected from the *kingdom* of the *Messiah*. Yet how very unjust it is, that any of those *contentions* which the *gospel* has accidentally occasioned should be urged as an argument against its *Divine authority*, the reader may see in the excellent *sermons* of the present *Bishop of Winchester* on this subject, in his *Miscellaneous Tracts*. In one word, the matter will issue in this; that if *Christianity* has occasioned more *discord* than any *other religion*, the only reason is, because it animates its professors to greater zeal for the truth, and better proves it to be worth their while to *suffer for conscience sake*.

c *And the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.*] The thought seems to *sink* here, as it is much more usual for *mothers* and *daughters-in-law*, in whatever relation, to quarrel, than *natural parents* and *children*: but if we consider, that *our Lord* speaks of *this* as the *first occasion* of a *quarrel* between them, it may intimate a supposition, that they were persons of a *friendly temper*, who, even in *such a relation*, might otherwise have lived together on easy terms: a thought which seems to me to enliven the discourse, and which may lead us to reflect how often *bigotry* entirely transforms a natural disposition, that in itself was mild and amiable. Compare Luke xii. 53, *note* d, sect. cxv.

d *He*

d a man's foes they of his ischold.

that they might otherwise have agreed. So that the ties of blood shall be forgotten, and the bonds of friendship violated; *and a man's enemies*, yea oftentimes the most severe and inveterate of them, [*shall be*] *those of his own family*, and it may be, the nearest of his relations, from whom he might justly have expected the greatest friendship.

SECT. lxxvi.

Mat. X. 36.

: that loveth mother more , is not worthy and he that on or daughter an me, is not of me;

Prepare yourselves then for such severe trials as these, by remembering, that *he who loves* his *father or mother more than me*, and is induced by his regard to them to disobey my precepts, or to renounce my doctrine, *is not worthy of me*, nor shall have any interest in my saving benefits; *and he that loves* even his *son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of* an interest in *me* and my friendship, though it should be an only child that he prefers to me, and for the sake of whom he abandons my gospel. 37

nd he that takhis cross, and after me, is thy of me:

And, in a word, *he that* is so concerned for his own ease and safety that he will not suffer for my sake, and *does not* resolutely *take* up *his cross* when providentially laid in his way, *and follow after me*,[d] even to die upon it, when the honour of my name and cause requires it, and I, as the captain of his salvation, lead him on to it, cannot be owned as my faithful disciple, and *is not worthy of* an interest in *me*. (Compare Mark viii. 34. sect. lxxxix.) 38

e that findeth shall lose it: that loseth his my sake, shall

Be assured however, that you shall find it to be well worth your while to endure all these extremities for my sake; for *he that finds* and saves *his life*, by deserting my cause, *shall lose it* on the whole, as he will thus incur a sentence of final condemnation and destruction[e]; *but he that* out of faithfulness to me *loses his life*, and lays it down *for my sake, shall find it* in a far more noble state of being, which infinitely better deserves the name of life. 39

And

that does not take up *his cross, and ter me.*] This alludes to the custom us *carrying the cross* to which they be fastened; and was a strong intithat he should himself be *crucified*; none could be a sincere *Christian* a *willingness to bear* even that l and cruel *death* for his sake, if he ed to it. See *Grotius, in loc.*

that finds his life shall lose it, &c.] se that I have given in the *para*as it is much more general, and more important, appears to me much preferable to that of Dr. Hammond, who interprets the text, of the *Christians saving their lives* by leaving *Jerusalem* in the last siege of that place by the *Romans*, and the *Jews losing theirs* by crowding into it. The beauty and energy of *Christ's* discourse in a parallel place) Mat. xvi. 24—26, sect. lxxxix.) would be quite lost by this interpretation; and indeed many *Christians* had actually *lost their lives* for the gospel many years before that siege commenced.

[f] Hospitably

SECT. LXXVI.

Mat. X. 40

And as for you, my servants, let none be afraid of shewing kindness to you, lest they should share with you in your sufferings for my sake; for *he that entertains you, does* in effect *entertain me*, whose ministers you are; *and he that entertains me, does* also *entertain him that sent me*, and my heavenly Father will regard it as done to himself; as, on the other hand, all the slights and injuries which are offered to you will be considered as reflecting not only on me,

41 but on him. And did men truly understand their own interest, they would rejoice to assist you in that noble work in which you are engaged: for *he that* hospitably *entertains a prophet*[f] *in the name of a prophet*, or with a pious regard to the office he bears, *shall receive the reward of a prophet* himself, or a reward proportionable to the worth of the person he shelters and accommodates in a time of danger and difficulty; *and he that entertains [any] righteous man in the name of a righteous man*, or with a cordial regard to the virtues of his character, *shall* himself

42 *receive the reward of a righteous man.* Nor shall even the smallest *and* cheapest favour to the least of my servants be forgotten; for *whosoever*, being able to do no more, *shall give to drink unto one of these little ones*, or to one of these my followers, who makes the meanest appearance, even so much as *a cup of cold water only*, to refresh him in the fatigue to which he is exposed in my service, if he shall give it to him *in the name of a disciple*, or with a real affection to him on account of his relation to me, *verily I say unto you, he shall by no means lose his* proportionable *reward*, but shall find himself abundantly repaid both with present and future blessings.

40 He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.

41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward.

42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

Mat. XI. 1.

And it came to pass after this solemn and instructive charge had been delivered, that *when Jesus had made an end of giving instructions to his twelve disciples*, and had prepared them for the service they were now to undertake, *he* did not lay aside the work himself, but still pursued it with an unwearied diligence and zeal, and *departed thence to teach* the Jews, in other parts, the

MAT. XI. 1. And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach

[f] Hospitably *entertains a prophet.*] The word ἐπιχωρεῖ here plainly signifies to *entertain in a hospitable way*, as it does likewise Heb. xi. 31. Jam. ii. 25. and elsewhere: nor can the *gradation* in the following words be understood without such an interpretation. The *apostles* were, no doubt, regarded as a kind of divinely inspired *prophets*; though that title, by way of distinction, was afterwards appropriated to persons of an inferior rank. 1 Cor. xii. 28, and Eph. iv. 11.

teach and to preach in their cities.

the doctrines of his gospel, *and to preach in their cities.* SECT. lxxvi.

MARK VI. 12. And they [departed, and] went out [through the towns,] and preached [the gospel,] that men should repent. [LUKE, IX. 6.—]

The twelve apostles also, in pursuance of the commission they had now received, set out at the same time; *and they departed* from the presence of their Master, *and went through the towns* of Galilee, and the neighbouring places, *and preached the gospel* wherever they came; insisting with great earnestness upon it, *that men should repent* of their sins, and prepare for that glorious manifestation of his presence, which God was about to favour them with. Mark VI. 12.

13 And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed *them.* [every where.] [LUKE IX. —6.]

And in consequence of that miraculous power with which Jesus had invested them, *they expelled many demons, and anointed many sick persons with oil,* as a signal of healing which he had been pleased to direct (compare Jam. v. 14), *and* perfectly *cured them,* whatsoever their malady was; and this they did *every where* as they went on in their progress. 13

IMPROVEMENT.

JUSTLY may the blessed *Jesus* set so high a value on himself, and on the blessings of his grace: justly may he insist upon our readiness to *abandon all for him,* who is so just an equivalent for all. May his grace teach us to *love him more* than the dearest of our *relations,* and even to be ready *for his sake* to sacrifice our *lives!* May it make us willing to *take up* and bear *any cross* for him, who *bore his cross* and expired upon it for us! Mat. X. 37, 38

The *gospel* has indeed been the occasion of much *contention* and *persecution,* not only in *Judea* but elsewhere. yet let us not charge it upon any malignity, or any deficiency in that, but on the lusts and corruptions of men, who have either directly opposed or grossly perverted it. Let us endeavour to arm ourselves with *courage* to encounter, and resolution to endure, whatever *persecutions* or *injuries* our adherence to it may cost us; ever confiding in that gracious *Providence* which extends itself even to the *meanest creatures:* reposing ourselves on the *support* of *Divine consolations,* and esteeming ourselves happy, even in *losing our lives* in this world, if we may *find them* in that which is everlasting. 34, 35 36 29, 30 39

In the mean time, may this excellent *discourse* of our blessed *Redeemer* animate us to every *work of faith,* and every *labour of love!* Let not the *poorest* be discouraged from some charitable attempt for the good of others; since the munificence of our heavenly Master will remember *even a cup of cold water* given to *the least of his servants* under that character. Yet since there will 42

be

SECT. lxxvi. be such a *variety of rewards* proportionable to different degrees of liberality and zeal, let us indulge a generous ambition of *abounding in the work of the Lord*, that we may shine with distinguished glory in the day of retribution, and have *an abundant entrance into his kingdom.*

SECT. LXXVII.

Herod hears of Jesus, and suspects him to be John the Baptist, whom he had lately murdered in a manner which is here recounted. Mat. XIV. 1, 2, 6—12. Mark VI. 14—29. Luke IX. 7—9.

MAT. XIV. 1.

SECT. lxxvii. NOW *at that time* [a], while the apostles were making their circuit about the country, proclaiming every where the glories of their great Master, and working miracles in his name, *king Herod* (as *the tetrarch* we mentioned above [b] was generally called) *heard of the fame of Jesus*, [*and*] was informed by many *of all the* marvelous *things that were done by him* and his apostles; *for*, by the account they gave concerning him in their mission, concurring with his own miracles and preaching, *his name was* every where *spread abroad*, and had reached many places far more distant than the court of Herod [c].

Mat. XIV. 1.

MAT. XIV. 1.

AT that time [king] Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, [LUKE, *and* of all that was done by him;] [for his name was spread abroad:] [MARK VI. 14. LUKE IX. 7.—]

2 And immediately his own guilty conscience suggested a fear that he could not forbear disclosing to those that were about him; *and* such was his surprise and terror, that *he said* even *to his* own *servants*, *This is John the Baptist*, whom I put to death; *he is* undoubtedly *risen from the dead, and for this reason* he appears with greater honour than ever, and these *extraordinary powers* now *operate in him*, though before he wrought no miracles.

2 And [he] said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. [MARK VI. —14.]

And

a *At that time.*] Both Mark and Luke so expressly connect this with the preceding section, that there can be no room to doubt that this is its true place.

b *The tetrarch* we mentioned above.] Though he was called *tetrarch* for a particular reason, as heir to only a *fourth part* of his father's dominions; yet in this district (which was that of *Galilee*) he was properly a *king*. See *note* [n] on Mat. ii. 22. sect. xiii. and Luke iii. 1. sect. xv.

c More distant than the court of Herod.] The *letters* pretended to have passed between Christ and Abgarus, *king* of *Edessa*, and preserved by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccles.* lib. 1, cap. 13), are probably *spurious*; though Dr. Cave, the learned Dr. Grabe (*Spicileg.* Vol. 1. p. 1—6), and the celebrated Mr. Addison (in his *Discourse on Christianity*, sect. 1), seem inclined to receive them.—They might however have their foundation in some *message* from that prince to *Jesus*. But the remark in the *paraphrase* is much more certainly confirmed by Mat. iv. 24, 25. sect. xxxvi.

d Herod

SECT. lxxvi.

Luke IX. 7.

And notwithstanding Herod had imbibed the principles of the Sadducees [d], which were directly opposite to such a supposition, *he was exceedingly anxious* [e] on account of the reports he heard; *for* the notion was not merely his own, but *it was said* too *by some* others, *that John was risen from the dead*, and would undoubtedly use his miraculous power to punish those who had murdered him. *And* it was also conjectured *by* 8 *some, that Elijah had appeared*, according to the general expectation, as the fore-runner of the Messiah (compare Mal. iv. 5. Mat. xi. 14. and xvii. 10—12.) *and by others, that one of the ancient prophets was risen again* from the dead: *and others* also *said, It is* certainly *a prophet* of the former generations, *or* [*a person*] at least *like one of the prophets* [f]; for such miraculous works do as evidently speak a Divine mission as any of theirs ever did. *But* in the midst of this variety of opinions, *when Herod heard* what was discoursed [*of Jesus*] *he* was exceedingly distressed, and *said* with great anxiety, *John I have* certainly *beheaded*, and received the strongest proofs that the execution was performed; *but, who is this, of whom I hear such things?* I would not willingly believe it, yet I cannot but suspect that whatsoever be the name he now assumes, *it is John*, that venerable holy man *whom I beheaded* and greatly fear *he is risen from the dead.* And he was so uneasy under the consciousness of the enormous crime he had committed in putting him to death, that, licentious as his principles and character were [g], he was alarmed and terrified with the apprehension of his being actually returned

Mark VI. 16.

...e IX.—7. And ...perplexed, be... ...at it was said ..., that John was ...om the dead;

...d of some, that ...ad appeared; ...others, that one ...ld prophets was ...gain: [and o... ...id, that it is a ..., or as one ...prophets.]—— ...VI. 15.]

...e VI. 16. But ...Herod heard ...he said, [John ...beheaded; but ...this, of whom ...such things?] ...n whom I be... ...he is risen ...dead. [And ...ed to see him.] ...IX. 9.]

...d had imbibed the principles of ...ucees.] See *note* g below.

...*was exceedingly anxious*.] διηπορει expresses a mixture of *doubt* and ...ich must necessarily throw the ...o a very uneasy situation.

...*ophet, or a person* at least *like one* ...*ophets*.] This plainly proves that ...ord *prophet* they generally meant ...e holy men whom God had raised ...s people in former ages; and if ...*cle* η be omitted, as it is in some ...*pts*, the argument is equally con... See *note* c, sect. xx.

...ntious as his principles and cha...ere.] Josephus tells us that the ...in principles prevailed much a... ...rich and great; (*Antiq.* lib. xviii. ...al. 2) § 4.) And it is very pro...rod was of *this sect*, as what is called in one text *the leaven of the Sadducees*, is in another called *the leaven of Herod* (compare Mat. xvi. 6, with Mark viii. 15.) not to mention a kind of hereditary quarrel which there seems to have been between the *Herodian* family and the *Pharisees*. (See *note* f on Mark iii. 6, sect. 1.)—But it is no easy matter to arrive at a steady belief of so great an absurdity as the *mortality* of the *soul*. The *existence* of the *soul* after death and a state of *future retribution*, and other evident principles of *natural religion* connected with both, will even force themselves upon the unbelieving heart, and wring it with anguish which it cannot always, though it may frequently, conceal. This is admirably illustrated by *Bishop Atterbury* in his *sermon* on this *text* and subject.

...vi.

h As

SECT. lxxvii.

returned to life; *and*, not knowing what to think of the reports he heard of Jesus, *he* earnestly *desired to see him*, that his doubts might be removed.

Mark VI. 16.

17 Thus was his guilty mind perplexed and tormented, and not without reason; *for*, as we have before observed [h], *Herod had* formerly *seized John. and bound him* with chains *in prison*, *on account of* the reproof he gave him for his marrying *Herodias*; *Because*, as Herod had seduced her from his brother Philip, who was still living and had a daughter by her, *John had said* to him, with a freedom that he could not bear, *It is not lawful for thee* thus *to have thy brother's wife.*

17 For Herod had —laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias's sake:—

18 For John had said,—It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

19 *And* we had likewise added, that, for this reason, *Herodias* also was incensed against him, and *would have put him to death*; *but* for a long time *she could not* compass her design; *For Herod had* so great *a reverence for John*, that he would not yield to her solicitations: But we must now inform the reader, that before this time she had found a way of accomplishing her cruel purpose.

19 Therefore Herodias — would have killed him, but she could not.

20 For Herod feared John.—

21 For as her heart was filled with malice, *and* she was ever watching for an opportunity to be revenged on John, at length *a convenient day happened* of preferring her petition with unexpected circumstances of advantage: a public festival was kept, *when Herod on his birth-day* [i] *made a* splendid *supper for* the entertainment of *his lords*, *and* of all the *chief officers* of his army [k], *and other persons of distinguished rank*

21 And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birth day made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee: [MAT. XIV. —6]

22 *in Galilee*, over which he presided: *And*, to grace the solemnity, Salome, *the daughter of the above-mentioned Herodias* by Philip her former husband, a young lady of celebrated beauty, *coming in* publicly among them, *and dancing in the midst* of the assembly; this instance of condescension,

22 And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced [before them,] and

h As we have before observed.] I have ventured to repeat here a few clauses of Mark, because they seemed to me absolutely necessary to introduce the following account of Herod's beheading *John the Baptist*. These *verses* are before inserted at large in sect. xxviii. p. 157, 158.

i *When Herod on his birth-day.*] Some great critics, and particularly Grotius, Heinsius, and Reland, choose to interpret this, of the *day of* Herod's *accession*, rather than *his birth*, which they think would have been more properly expressed by γενεθλιων than γενεσιων. (See *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 100—102.) But it is evident, the *seventy* use ημερα γενεσιως for a *birth-day*; Gen. xl. 20.

k *Chief Officers* of his army.] Though the word χιλιαρχος properly signifies one who had the *command of a thousand men*, and held a rank in their army nearly answering to that of the *colonels* in ours, there can be no reason to imagine that the entertainment was confined just to that rank of *officers*: I have therefore rendered it in a more general way.

l This

d, and with said , Ask r thou l give XIV.

romi- oath, her, shalt l give e half MAT.

went unto What d she f John

[being ed of me in haste , and I will e me by, in head aptist.

condescension, so unusual in those days and countries, especially in persons of such high dignity [l], was so exceedingly agreeable *and pleasing* unto *Herod and his guests*, that *the king said* before them all *to the maiden* in a kind of transport, *Ask of me whatever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.* *And* when she seemed sur- 23 prised at such a declaration, to encourage her to depend on what he said, *he promised her with* the solemnity of *an oath*, [*and*] profanely and foolishly *sware unto her* more than once [m], *I will give thee whatsoever thou wilt ask of me, even* though it should be *to the* [*value of*] *half of my kingdom.*

And, young as she was, she perceived this was 24 now grown a circumstance of high importance, and might be managed to considerable advantage; *she* therefore *went out, and said to her mother*, who was not in the assembly, *What shall I ask?* *And she*, struck with this unexpected opportunity of executing her revenge, eagerly *replied*, Ask *the head of John the Baptist*, who would have expelled and ruined us both; for nothing in the power of the king to grant could give me equal satisfaction.

And, though at first she hesitated at so shocking 25 a proposal, yet *being* thus *before urged* to it *by her mother*, and at length confirmed in the resolution [n], *she immediately*, after a very short absence, *came unto the king with* speed in her motion and *eagerness* in her countenance, *and made her demand, saying, I desire that*, in accomplishment of thy promise, *thou wouldest give me, presently, the head of John the Baptist;* and that I may be sure the execution is done, let the head be brought and delivered to me *here in a charger*, or large dish [o].

SECT. lxxvii.

Mark VI. 22.

And

e of condescension, so un- ys, &c.] Dr. Lardner very hat it was very unusual for *rank* to appear before the —12). and much less to nquets as these. See his *he Gospel History*, part i.

her more than once.] ry well concluded, because *lists* use the *plural* ὀρχοῦς, l Mark vi. 26.

e urged to it *by her mother*, onfirmed in the resolution.] προβιβασθεῖσα seems to in- , with his usual accuracy, nd there is indeed much more reason to wonder that she was induced to make such a request at all, than that she made some *difficulty*, for a while, of presenting it, considering how savage it seemed, and how many pleasing views must be sacrificed to it. But at last her *mother's* remonstrances seem to have wrought her up to great *emotion*, which the *evangelist* well expresses by saying, *She came in* εὐθέως μετὰ σπουδῆς *immediately*, and *with eagerness*. The whole narration of Mark, which is by far the most circumstantial, is very much *animated;* as Mr. Blackwell has justly observed in his *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 383.

o *The head of John the Baptist in a charger.*] It was well known that it was and is

SECT. lxxvii.

Mark VI. 26. *And the king was exceedingly sorry*, as well as greatly surprised, that she should prefer so strange a petition; *nevertheless*, as she persisted in it, *for the sake of his* repeated *oaths*, *and* out of regard to *his guests*, in whose presence they were made, *he would not deny her*, [*but*] granted what she asked, and *ordered that it should be given her.*

26 And the king was exceeding sorry; [nevertheless] for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him [at meat,] he would not reject her, [*but* commanded *it* to be given *her.*] [MAT. XIV. 9.]

27 *And immediately, the king sent one of his guards*[p] as an executioner, that very night, *and commanded his head to be brought* into the assembly: *and*, as soon as the soldier had received his orders, *he* presently *went*, *and* without any further warning, *beheaded John in the prison.*

27 And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded [John] in the prison. [MAT. XIV.—10.]

28 *And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the maiden; and the maiden*, forgetting the tenderness of her sex[q], and the dignity of her rank, with a steady cruelty, agreeable to her relation to so ill a woman, *brought* [*and*] *delivered it to her mother* with her own hands. And thus, till the righteous judgment of God overtook them all[r], they gratified themselves in the indulgence of their lusts, and triumphed in the murder of this holy prophet.

28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel [brought *it*, *and*] gave it to her mother.—[MAT. XIV. 11.]

29 *And* the next day, *his disciples hearing* [*of it*,] *came* to the prison, *and* having permission to do it, *took up his corpse, and laid it* with great reverence, and due lamentation, *in a sepulchre* belonging to some of them, who were willing to pay this last act of duty to their master's memory: *and* then they *went and told Jesus* what had happened, and remembering the repeated testimony which John had borne to him, continued their attendance upon him.

29 And when his disciples heard *of it*, they came, and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb, and went and told Jesus. [MAT. XIV. 12.]

IMPROVE-

is customary with princes in those *eastern* parts to require the *head* of those they order to be *executed* to be brought to them, that they may be assured of their death. The *Grand Signior* does it to this day. See Dr. Lardner, in the place cited in *note* l, p. 24, 25.—The word πινακ signifies *a large dish*, which the antiquated word *charger* well expresses; for which reason I chose to retain it.

p *One of his guards.*] So σπεκουλατωρα properly signifies, or *one who was then standing centry.* There were no *executioners* in those times whose peculiar business it was to put persons to death.

q Forgetting the tenderness of her sex.] This may perhaps be intimated in the repetition of the word *maiden.* Jerom tells us that Herodias treated *the Baptist's head* in a very disdainful manner, pulling out the *tongue* which she imagined had injured her, and pierced it with a needle.

r Till the righteous judgment of God overtook them all.] Dr. Whitby, after many others, observes, that Providence interested itself very remarkably in the *revenge* of this *murder* on all concerned. Herod's army was defeated in a war occasioned by his marrying Herodias, which many *Jews* thought a judgment sent upon him for the death of John: *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xviii. cap. 5 (al. 7), § 1, 2.) Both *he* and Herodias, whose ambition occasioned his ruin, were afterwards driven from their kingdom with great regret, and died in banishment at *Lyons in Gaul: (Joseph. ibid.* cap. 7. (al. 9.) § 2.) And if any credit may be given to *Nicephorus (Hist.* lib. 1, cap. 20), Salome, the young lady who made this cruel request, fell into the ice, as she was walking over it, which closing suddenly, cut off her head.

IMPROVEMENT.

How dreadful a thing is it to have a guilty and accusing conscience! and how remarkable was the force of it in the instance before us! *Herod* was a *king*, yet it addressed him in language of terror, and made itself heard and felt amidst all the hurries and flatteries of a court. Vain was the power of a *prince*; vain the caresses of a favourite *mistress*, basely gratified with the blood of a prophet; and vain the yet more besotting *tenets* of a *Sadducee*. In one instance at least a *resurrection* shall be *believed*; and if a *prophet* arise in *Israel*, *Herod* shall be among the first to say, *It is John the Baptist, risen from the dead*; and shall be ready to forbode the sad effects of his recovered life, and to prognosticate evil to himself from the *mighty works* he performed. Let us make it our care to preserve *a conscience void of offence*, that instead of a continual *torment*, it may be to us a *continual feast!* SECT. LXXVII. Mark VI. 14, 16.

And if we really desire to preserve it, let us take heed that we be not excessively *transported* with the *entertainments* of life, or rashly *enter* ourselves into *engagements* which perhaps may plunge us into some degree of guilt, whether they be performed or violated. 22, 23

We see, in this dreadful instance of *Herodias*, what an implacable degree of *malice* may arise in the hearts of sinners on being *reproved* for the most scandalous and mischievous vices. Instead of owning the *obligation* to one that would have plucked her *as a brand out of the burning*, she *thirsts* insatiably for his *blood*: and chooses rather to indulge her cruelty and revenge in *taking away his life*, than to gratify her avarice and ambition in *demanding a gift* that might have been equal *to the half of a kingdom.* 24

But how *mysterious* was that *providence*, which left the *life* of so *holy a man* in such infamous hands, and permitted it to be sacrificed to the malice of an abandoned *harlot*, to the petulancy of a *vain girl*, and to the rashness of a foolish and perhaps an intoxicated *prince*, who made the *prophet's head* the *reward of a dance! The ways of God are unsearchable!* but we are sure he can never be at a loss to *repay* his servants in another world for the greatest *sufferings* they endure in this, and even for *life itself*, when given up in his cause. 25, 27

We may reasonably conclude, that *death* could never be an *unseasonable surprise* to this *excellent saint*. When the *executioner came into the prison* by night, perhaps breaking in upon his slumbers, and executed his *bloody commission* almost as soon as he declared it, a soul like his might *welcome the stroke*, as the means of liberty and glory; assured that the transient *agony of a moment* would 27

SECT. LXXVII.

would transmit it to a *kingdom* where *the least* of its inhabitants would be in holiness, honour and felicity, *superior to John* in his most prosperous and successful state on earth.

29 *His enemies* might a while insult over him, while *his disciples* were mingling their tears with his dust, and lamenting the residue of *his days cut off in the midst.* His *death* was *precious in the sight of the Lord,* and *the triumphing of the wicked* was *short.* So will he ere long *plead the cause* of all his injured people, and give *a cup of trembling and astonishment* to those that have made themselves *drunk with their blood.* Let *cruelty* and *tyranny* do their worst, *verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.* (Psal. lviii. 11.

SECT. LXXVIII.

When the apostles were returned from executing their commission, our Lord passes over the sea of Tiberias; and finding vast multitudes had followed him to the place of his intended retirement, he instructs and heals them; and, having miraculously fed above five thousand, retires afterwards to pray. Mat. XIV. 13—23. Mark VI. 30—46. Luke IX. 10—17. John VI. 1—15.

MARK VI. 30.

SECT. LXXVIII.

AND quickly after this awful event of the Baptist's death[a], which has been just related,

Mark VI. 30. *the* twelve *apostles, when they were returned* from their circuit, *gathered together unto Jesus, and told him all* the occurrences of their late journey; recounting to him, *both what* miracles *they had done* by his divine assistance, *and what* doctrine *they had taught* according to his direction.

31 *And when Jesus heard* [*of it*,] and was informed (as we have just now seen) of the death of John, as well as of the event of the journey which his apostles had been making, *he said to them, Come ye yourselves privately* with me *into a solitary place* in the neighbouring desart, *and repose* yourselves *a while* after the fatigue of your journey, that we may there indulge such meditations as are suitable to this awful dispensation. And it was necessary to give them this advice, *for there were many* continually *coming and going* to and from the public place in which they then were, *so that they had no opportunity even to*

MARK VI. 30.

AND the apostles [when they were returned,] gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. [LUKE IX. 10.—]

31 And [when Jesus heard *of it*] he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desart place, and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. [MAT. XIV. 13—]

a After this awful event of the Baptist's death.] Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are all so express in the *connection of this story* with the foregoing, that there can be no doubt as to the propriety and necessity of placing it here.

b *After*

to eat without interruption, and much less had they leisure for religious retirement and recollection. SECT. LXXVIII.

LUKE IX.—10. And [JOHN, after these things,] he took them and went aside, [MARK, and they departed [thence] by ship,] privately, into a desart place, belonging to the city called Bethsaida; [JOHN, *and* Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea* of Tiberias.] [MAT. XIV. —13.—MARK VI. 32. JOHN VI. 1.

And accordingly, *after these things*[b], *he took them* with him, *and retired* from the multitude: *and they departed from thence*, (even from the place where they had been so much crowded and hurried,) and setting out *in a ship privately*, they withdrew *into a* lonely *desart belonging to the city called Bethsaida*, which we have several times mentioned before. [*And*] as this desart was divided from the place they set out from by a creek or bay of the sea, *Jesus* in passing to it *went over* a part of *the sea of Galilee, which is* also sometimes called [*the sea*] *of Tiberias*[c], because that is the most considerable place on its shore. Luke IX. 10.

MARK VI. 33. And [when] the people saw them departing, and many knew him, [and heard *thereof*,] [JOHN, a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles, which he did on them that were diseased:] and [they] ran a-foot thither out of all [the] cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him

And when the people who had been attending on his ministry *saw them departing, and*, though he was at some distance, *many* of them *knew him*[d], *and* others thereabout *heard of* [*it*] *a great multitude following him; because they had seen his miracles, which he* had just before *performed on them that were diseased*, and, struck with the energy of them, were impatiently desirous still to hear so Divine a Teacher. *And*, therefore, observing how he steered his course, and guessing right as to the place at which he intended to land, *they ran thither on foot*, and increased Mark VI. 33.

b *After these things.*] I have before observed (in *note*[a] on John v. 1, p. 250.) that Mr. Manne supposes *this sixth chapter* of John ought to be *connected* with the *end of the fourth* (see his *Dissertations*, p. 157.—163); and the rather, because he fancies one may find a *connection* between John iv. 54, and vi. 1. the *first* of which *texts* tells us that *Jesus was in Galilee*; and the *latter*, that *he went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias*. But I cannot see the least force in the argument, considering how often *Christ* changed his place, and came back again to that which he had formerly visited: nor can he urge it with any *consistence*, because, according to *his own scheme* of the *harmony*, *Christ* had crossed the sea to *Gergasa*, and dispossessed the *Legion*, after the cure of the *nobleman's son*, and long before the *passing over the sea*, that is here referred to (which was plainly not to *Gergasa*, but to the *desart of Bethsaida*): so that there is no shadow of a reason for such an unexampled *transposition*, which has no *copy* or *version* to support it. Besides, that this requires *another change* in ver. 4, which is equally arbitrary, and (as we shall shew in *note* e of this *section*) most contrary not only to the faith of all *copies*, but to the reason of things.

c Sometimes called *the sea of Tiberias.*] We have before observed that it had various names, (See *note* b on Luke v. 1, p. 187.)—It is not necessary to suppose they *crossed the lake*: if they did, it was only over the extremity of it; or possibly they only made a coasting voyage round some *creek* or *bay* of it; otherwise it is hard to say how the people *going on foot* could have been there *before him*, as it is said they were, Mark vi. 33. See *Lightf. Hor. Heb.* on Mat. xiv. 13; and *Calmet, Dissert.* Tom. I. part. i. p. 89.

d *Many knew him.*] It should seem that *Christ* ordered the vessel to be prepared at some *distance* from the place where the multitude was; yet not so far off but some of the company could make a shift to *distinguish* who he was.

e *The*

SECT. lxxviii. increased their numbers *out of all the cities* by which they passed: *and* they pursued their journey with such eagerness, that they *outwent them* who had taken ship, *and*, getting round to the shore where he was to land, they *came together to him*, and stood ready to salute him in a large body.

him. [MAT. XIV.—13. LUKE IX. 11.—JOHN VI. 2.]

Mark VI. 33.

34 *And Jesus, when he came out* of the ship, *and saw* such *a great multitude* of people, who had taken so much pains to meet him there, *was moved with* tender *compassion for them; because* he perceived *they were* sadly neglected by those who ought to have been their spiritual guides, and were forced to wander from place to place, *as sheep having no shepherd* to feed and take care of them: *and* with this he was struck to such a degree, that though he had come thither for retirement, *he* did not either dismiss or forsake them; but, on the contrary, *received them* in a most condescending and indulgent manner, *and began* with renewed zeal and fervency *to teach them many* important *things; and*, in particular, *spake to them concerning the kingdom of God* which he was now erecting, *and healed* many of *their sick* people, [*even all*] *those that* were brought to him and *had need of healing*.

34 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: [LUKE, and he received them,] and began to teach them many things, [LUKE, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed [their sick, *even all*] them that had need of healing,] [MAT. XIV. 14. LUKE IX.—11.]

John VI. 3

And, in prosecution of this design, that he might be heard and seen with the greater advantage, *Jesus went up into a mountain, and there sat* down *with his disciples*, and the multi-

JOHN VI. 3. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 tudes about him. *And* indeed it was a season of the year which admitted it; for the spring was now so far advanced, that *the passover, a* grand *feast of the Jews, was near*[e].

4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

And

[e] *The passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.*] Almost all who have compiled *harmonies* of the *gospels* have concluded that *this* was at least the *third passover* of *our Lord's* public ministry; and Sir Isaac Newton reckons it the *fourth*. See *note* [a] on John ii. 13. p. 136.) But Mr. Manne advances a most singular *hypothesis*, which is, that it was *no passover* at all, but was the *feast of Pentecost*: (*Dissert.* p. 163.) But he has no authority for making such an *alteration*, all the old *manuscripts* and *versions* agreeing with the received reading, which therefore should not be changed without urgent necessity; whereas there is no necessity at all for it in this place: nor is it possible that *this* should be, as he supposes, the *feast of pentecost*, following the *first passover* of *Christ's ministry*; because such things are expressly said to have happened between *that passover* and *this feast*, as could not be crowded into the narrow compass assigned them on this scheme. For, according to Mr. Manne's scheme, the *passover* happened on *April the 2d*, the *feast of pentecost* on *May the 23d*, and *this miracle of feeding the five thousand* at the latter end of *April*. Now he himself allows that, after the *first passover* [at which he staid long enough to work *many miracles*, and to have a conference with Nicodemus,] Jesus [having, as John tells us, chap. iii. 22. *tarried* some time with *his disciples* in *Judea*, and made so *many disciples* there that he alarmed the *Pharisees*; see John iv. 1.] went through *Samaria*; and after having spent *two days* at *Sichar*, [and every *hour* in such a circumstance is important,]

SECT. lxxviii.

Luke IX. 12.

LUKE IX. 12. And when the day began to wear away, [MARK, and was now far spent,] [and it was evening;] then [his disciples] *even* the twelve, came [MARK, unto him and] said, This is a desart place, and now the time is far passed,] send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, [MARK, and buy themselves bread,] and get victuals: [MARK, for they have nothing to eat.] [MAT. XIV. 15. MARK VI. 35, 36.]

And when they had thus spent *the day* in a delightful attendance upon him, and it *now began to decline, and* indeed *was so far spent that the evening came on, then* some of *his disciples*, and particularly *the twelve* apostles, who were now round him, *came to him, and said, This is a* solitary *desart place*, where there is neither food nor lodging to be had, *and the time* of day *is now far advanced;* it will therefore be proper to put an end to thy discourse, and to *dismiss the multitude, that they may go into the towns and country-places round about* us, *and* find conveniences to *lodge* there, *and may* have opportunity to *buy themselves bread and get* other *food; for they have* fasted all the day, and can have *nothing* here *to eat.*

JOHN VI. 5. When Jesus then lift up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

Then Jesus lifted up his eyes, and, seeing a great company who (as was said before) were *come* out of all the cities *to him, he says to Philip*, who, being a native of Bethsaida, was acquainted in that country, (John i. 44. sect. xxii.) How and *whence shall we buy bread* for the entertainment of all these people, *that they may eat* with me before we part? (*And this he said* only *to try him*, and to give him an opportunity of observing what followed, more attentively; *for he himself* very well *knew what he was about to do*, and had determined how to proceed. But *Philip*, forgetting what had been done of this kind by Elijah and Elisha, prophets so far inferior to Jesus (1 Kings xvii. 14—16. and 2 Kings iv. 4—6, 42—44.) and

John VI. 5

6 (And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.)

6

7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is

7

important,] came into *Galilee*, and taught in *all their synagogues;* preached the *sermon on the mount;* and then [having, as Luke tells us, chap. iv. 31. *dwelt* a while at *Capernaum*, and *taught them on the sabbath days*,] cured Peter's *mother-in-law:* then having cast out *Legion*, cured the *paralytic*, called Matthew, and [after having kept them with him *some time*, as Mark and Luke intimate, sect. lii. p. 280,] sent out the *twelve apostles;* and having on *one sabbath* vindicated his *disciples* for *plucking the ears of corn*, and on *another* cured the *man with a withered hand*, he then goes to *Nazareth*, [where he spent at least *one sabbath;*] and, after many *other miracles*, and the *return* of the *twelve*, goes into the *desart;* [*John the Baptist* in the mean time having been seized (for it is directly said he was at *liberty* after the *first passover*, John iii. 24.) and after frequent *audiences*, while Herodias long waited an opportunity to destroy him, being at length *beheaded.*] *All these events*, except *those included* in *crotchets*, Mr. Manne expressly mentions, (p. 166—171); and *those* that are so *included*, the *evangelists* in express words *connect* with the rest. Now I appeal to any unprejudiced person, whether it is possible these things could happen *in a month.* It may rather be doubted whether *two years* be sufficient for them, and others connected with them in the *preceding sections.* On the whole, I cannot recollect any instance in which a person of such distinguished learning and abilities has been betrayed, by love to an *hypothesis*, into so palpable an error.—The reader will pardon my having been so large in *confuting a scheme* so inconsistent with *that* laid down above; and will, I hope, perceive that it is proved, not only to be precarious or unlikely, but even impossible.

SECT. lxxviii. and even by Jesus himself at Cana in Galilee, (John ii. 6—11. sect. xxiii.) was surprised that he should mention such a thing, and *answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread,* or as much as could be purchased for two hundred denarii[f], which is at present all our little stock, *is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little* refreshment, and much less would it furnish them with a full meal; it will be necessary therefore immediately to dismiss them, that they may have time to shift for themselves.

is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

John VI. 7.

Mat. XIV. 16 *But Jesus said to* him, and to *them* that stood near him, who had but just now made the same proposal, *They have no need to go away* fasting, nor am I willing to dismiss them so without any supply; and therefore let them have food for their refreshment here; and, instead of sending them away to provide for themselves, do you make ready for them, and *give ye them [something] to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we* then *go* to any neighbouring place, *and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread [and] mea t for all this* multitude of *people, and give [it] them to eat,* that it may go as far as it can? If such be thy pleasure, we shall not offer to dispute it, whatever be the consequence as to ourselves.

MAT. XIV. 16. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart, give ye them to eat. [And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, [LUKE, *and* meat for all this people,] and give them to eat?] [MARK. VI. 37. LUKE IX. 13.—]

Mark VI. 38 *But,* as *he* purposed in himself to entertain the multitude out of the little store of provisions they had, Jesus *says to them, How many loaves have you* here already? *go and see* that, and there will be no need of buying any more. Upon which *one of his disciples,* namely, *Andrew,* who was *Simon Peter's brother,* went to enquire; and, soon returning back with an account of what they had, he *says unto him,* I find *there is a lad here, that has five* coarse *barley loaves, and two small fishes,* which he would let us have; *but we have no more* to offer them, either of bread or meat; *[and] what are they among so many,* to satisfy the hunger of so great a company? *And he said* to them, Do you be under no concern about the scantiness of your provisions; but *bring them hither to me,* for even these shall suffice.

MARK VI. 38. He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see.

John VI. 8

JOHN VI. 8. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but [LUKE, we have no more, *and*] what are they among so many? [MAT. XIV. 17. MARK VI.—38. LUKE IX. 13.]

Mat. XIV. 18

MAT. XIV. 18. He said, Bring them hither to me.

And,

[f] For two hundred denarii.] This amounts to about *six pounds five shillings of our money.* The mention of *that sum* seems to intimate (as in the *paraphrase*) that their whole stock amounted to so much.

[g] *There*

SECT. lxxviii.

Mat. XIV. 19

And, when they were brought to him, *he commanded the multitude to sit down upon the green grass*, which at that season of the year was pretty high: *and*, that the distribution of the food might be more orderly, and the number of persons be the better observed, *he said to his disciples*, Let them be placed in order, and *cause them all to sit down by companies* in rows. *Now there was* then *much grass in the place*[g], in which they might sit down with ease and pleasure.

19—And he commanded the multitude to sit down [upon the green grass;] [LUKE, and he said to his disciples,] Make them all sit down by companies.] [JOHN, Now there was much grass in the place] [MARK VI. 39. LUKE IX. 14. —JOHN VI. 10.—]

Luke IX. 15.

And his disciples would no more dispute the matter with him; but *they did so*, as the Lord had commanded them, *and caused them all to sit down* though they could not see how they were to be fed. *The men therefore sat down* by themselves *in rows*, which there was room to pass between, *by hundreds and by fifties*, in a long square containing an hundred in rank and fifty in file[h]: and they were *about five thousand in number*, not to mention the women and children who were placed apart.

LUKE IX. 15. And they did so, and made them all sit down. [JOHN, So the men sat down] [in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties,] [JOHN, in number about five thousand.] [MARK VI. 40. LUKE IX.—14. JOHN VI.—10.

Mark VI. 41.

And Jesus, taking the five loaves and the two fishes, looked up to heaven with great reverence and affection, *and, having given thanks* to his heavenly Father for the bounties of his kind Providence, and the extraordinary instance of Divine favour now to be manifested, *he*, in a solemn manner, *blessed them*, commanding upon the provisions before him that singular blessing by which they were to be multiplied by the distribution; *and* then he *brake the loaves* in pieces, *and distributed them to his disciples, that they might set* [*them*] *before the multitude who were set down* upon the grass as he had ordered them: *and* accordingly *the disciples* [*gave them*] round *to* all *the multitude*, with believing hearts and unsparing hands: *and he likewise divided the two fishes*

MARK VI. 41. And when [JOHN, Jesus] had taken the five loaves, and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and [JOHN, when he had given thanks, he blessed [LUKE, them] and brake the loaves, and [JOHN, distributed] *them* to his disciples [LUKE, to set before the multitude] JOHN, that were set down,] [and the disciples *gave them* to the multitude;] and [JOHN, likewise] the two fishes divided he among them all, [JOHN,

g *There was much grass in the place.*] It is also said, (Mark vi. 39.) that the *grass was green*; as it was before the *passover*, but not near the *feast of pentecost*, when even the *corn harvest* was concluded. Though they sat thus on the ground, under no canopy but the sky, and had only barley bread, and, as it seems, cold, or dried *fishes* to eat, and probably nothing but water to drink; yet, as Mr. Henry truly and beautifully observes on Mat. xiv. 19. "There was more real grandeur displayed by the Master of this feast, than by Ahasuerus in that *royal feast* which was intended to *shew the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty.*" See Esth. i. 4—7.

h An hundred in rank, and fifty in file.] That this is the proper import, is abundantly proved by Mr. *Pierce* in his *Fifth Dissertation* annexed to the *Hebrews*. This was the shortest and exactest way of *ranging* them, and reconciles Mark's account above with Luke's, who only speaks of their *sitting down by fifties*. Thus disposed, they would wait more patiently till they were served in their turns; the *number* would appear at once; and they would see that Christ knew it.

SECT. lxxviii. *fishes among them all*, and gave them by the hands of his disciples to the whole company,

Mark VI. 42. supplying them with *as much as they would* take. *And* so wonderfully were the provisions increased by passing under his creating hands, that *they did all eat* of them till they had every one enough, *and were* all fully *satisfied.*

John VI. 12. *And, when they were* all sufficiently *filled, he says to his disciples*, Let there be no waste made of any part of the Divine bounties, but *gather up the broken pieces that remain, that* so *nothing*

13 *may be lost.* The disciples *therefore*, in obedience to his word, went through the several ranks of the whole company, and picking up the pieces that were left, *they gathered them together, and filled* no less than *twelve baskets with the* very *fragments of the five barley loaves, and of the* two *fishes, which remained over and above to them that had eaten:* a quantity vastly larger than they had at first.

Mat. XIV. 21. *And* yet *they who had eaten of the loaves* and fishes (as by the disposition of the multitude in rows the number of them might be easily computed *were about five thousand men, besides women and children*, who sat by themselves and might almost amount to an equal number.

John VI. 14. *The men therefore* who were present upon this occasion, and were thus miraculously entertained, *having seen the miracle which Jesus wrought*, after all the preceding wonders of the day, were so mightily struck with it, that they *said, Truly this is the* great *Prophet who was to come into the world*, and has so long been impatiently expected by us; even the Messiah himself, whom God has appointed to rule as well as to teach his people. (Compare Deut. xviii. 18. and see also 1 Mac. xiv. 41.) And, concluding that the same miraculous power could make itself victorious over all opposition, and easily could subsist and maintain an army [i] in the greatest extremity, they

[JOHN, as much as they would.] [MAT. XIV. —19. LUKE IX. 16. JOHN VI. 11.]

42 And they did all eat, and were filled. [MAT. XIV. 20.—LUKE IX. 17.—]

JOHN VI. 12. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

13 Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, [MARK, and of the fishes,] which remained over and above, unto them that had eaten. [MAT. XIV.—20. MARK VI. 43. LUKE IX.—17.]

MAT. XIV. 21. And they that had eaten [of the loaves,] were about five thousand men, besides women and children. [MAT. VI. 44.]

JOHN VI. 14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.

i Concluding that the same miraculous power could subsist and maintain an army.] It is certain, than an *army* of less than *five thousand men* might, under such a Leader, have accomplished the greatest events, and have obtained even *universal empire*, had he been pleased to exert his power to such purposes. They probably remembered how vast an host had been defeated by Gideon with only *three hundred men* with their *trumpets* and *lamps* (Judg. vii. 22.) not to mention Samson's slaying *a thousand* with a *jaw-bone* (Judg. xv. 15,) and other extraordinary events of this kind recorded in the *Old Testament*. (See 2 Kings iii. 21—24. 2 Chron. xx. 22—25. and compare Lev. xxvi. 8. They also knew that the whole body of the Jewish nation was then highly spirited with these sentiments; and might reasonably expect that *legions* of them would soon pour in to the standards of such a Leader.

k *Obliged*

they began to enter into measures for proclaiming his title to the kingdom of Israel, and fixing him on the throne of David his father. SECT. LXXVIII.

15 — When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, [MARK, straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go [before him] to the other side, unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.] [Mat. XIV. 22. MARK VI. 45.]

Jesus therefore, knowing that they would quickly urge this proposal, and that their hearts were so much set upon it, *that they were ready to come and seize him by force to make him king*, was determined immediately to part with them, lest he should give umbrage to the jealousy of the Romans, and lead the people that followed him into inconvenience and ruin: he therefore *immediately obliged his disciples to get into the ship* in which they had come thither,[k] *and to go before him to the other side* of the creek, *to* the city of *Bethsaida*[l], *while he dismissed the multitude*, who, upon seeing his disciples go abroad, would be more easily prevailed upon to go away. *And, when he had* accordingly *dismissed* the multitude, and sent *them* off as well as his disciples, *and the evening was* now *come, he again withdrew*, according to his frequent custom, [*and*] *ascended up by himself alone to a mountain* in those parts *to pray* to his heavenly Father, in which delightful exercise he spent the greatest part of the night. John VI. 15. Mark VI. 46.

MARK VI. 46. And when he had sent them away, [and the evening was come,] he departed [JOHN, again,] [*and* went up,] [JOHN, himself alone] into a mountain to pray.] [MAT. XIV. 23. JOHN VI.—15.]

IMPROVEMENT.

So evidently true is it that *man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God!* (Mat. iv. 4.) How wonderful did the *power of Christ* appear in thus *multiplying the food!* and how amiable his *compassion*, in his affectionate *concern for the relief* of his necessitous followers! It is to be esteemed a great happiness when the *ministers of the gospel* have it in their *power* Mark VI. 41. Mat. XIV. 16.

k *Obliged his disciples, &c.*] This phrase may intimate that they, who plainly appear to have been too fond of *secular views*, were rather inclined to *stay*, and quitted the multitude with some *reluctance* in what they thought so favourable a conjuncture. But it was certainly the highest *prudence* in Christ, considering what his purposes were, to order them away, and to dismiss them and the multitude before any thing happened which could alarm or offend even the most jealous *spies*, who might perhaps herd among the crowd.

l *And to go before him to the other side* to the creek *to Bethsaida.*] It was observed before, (Luke ix. 10, p. 411,) that they were now in in a *desert place belonging to Bethsaida*; which probably was divided from it by some *bay* or *creek* that run into the land: and Christ now only ordered his disciples to *pass over this creek* to the *city of Bethsaida*, where he might afterwards have joined them when he had *sent away the people*. But in their passage thither *a great storm* arose, and they were driven by *a contrary wind* into the *midst of the sea towards Capernaum*. This reconciles the place before us with the beginning of the *next section*, where, notwithstanding the direction Christ had given them *to go before him to Bethsaida*, we find them *going to Capernaum*, which lay on the *other side* of the lake. Compare *note* a, page 419.

SECT. lxxviii. *power* to assist men in their *temporal* as well as *spiritual necessities*; and it is peculiarly incumbent upon *them* thus *to do good and communicate: for with such sacrifices* from their hands *God is* peculiarly *well pleased*, and the *success* of their *ministry* may be greatly promoted by them. (Heb. xiii. 16.)

Mat. XIV. 16. John VI. 11. The *disciples received* from the *hand of Christ* the *food* they *delivered to the people*: and so should *ministers* be concerned, that they may *receive from Christ*, what they *dispense to others*, as the *bread of life*, and that *they* also at the same time may *live* upon it, as the *support* of their *own souls*. How great an honour is it to be employed as *stewards of the mysteries of God!* Let not immoderate *secular cares*, let not the desire of *worldly riches* or *greatness* 15 interrupt us in this blessed work! *Christ withdrew* from those who would have *made him king*: ill therefore does it become *his disciples* to pursue *earthly grandeur*; and most unworthy is it of *his ministers* to act as if *his kingdom* were *of this world*. May we *learn in every state to be content!* (Phil. iv. 11.) In *want* may we cheerfully *trust Providence!* In *plenty*, may we not wantonly 12 *abuse it!* but learn, by his command of *gathering up the fragments* even of his *miraculous feast*, a wise *frugality* in the use of our enjoyments; *that nothing may be lost*, nor a *reserve* be wanting, by which the streams of *future liberality* may be fed!

Mat. XIV. 23. When the day had been thus employed, *Christ retired to a mountain to pray*. Thus must *secret devotion* attend our *public labours* for the instruction and salvation of men, if we would secure that *Divine blessing*, without which, neither the most eloquent preaching, nor the most engaging and benevolent conduct, can command or promise success.

SECT. LXXIX.

As the disciples were upon the lake they are overtaken by a storm; and Christ comes to them, walking on the sea, and stills the tempest. Mat. XIV. 24, *to the end.* Mark VI. 47, *to the end.* John VI. 16—21.

JOHN VI. 16.

SECT. lxxix. IT was before observed, that, after the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, Christ ordered his disciples to depart, and go before him John VI. 16. to Bethsaida; *and* accordingly, *when the evening was come, his disciples went down to the sea* 17 [*side*;] *And, having entered into the ship* which waited for them, and put off from land, they quickly met with a cross wind that changed their course, and were soon driven farther from the shore than they designed; so that, instead of getting

JOHN VI. 16. AND, when even was *now* come, his disciples went down unto the sea; [MARK VI. 47.—]

17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea towards Capernaum: and it was now dark, [MARK, and the ship was in the midst

the midst of the sea :] and Jesus was not come unto them,] MARK, *but was* alone on the land.] [MAT. XIV. 24.—MARK VI. 47.]

getting to Bethsaida, *they were going to the other side of the sea towards Capernaum* [a]: *and*, night coming on, *it was now dark, and the ship was in the midst of the sea*, they did not exactly know where. *Now Jesus was not* yet *come to them* [b], [*but was*] still where they left him, by himself *alone on the land*, employed in secret devotion on the mountain to which he retired. SECT. lxxix. John VI. 17.

18 And the sea arose, by reason of a great wind that blew, [and the ship was tossed with waves; for the wind was contrary.] [MARK, unto them.] [MAT. XIV. —24. MARK VI. 48.]

In the mean time they were in circumstances of great danger *and* distress; for *the sea arose* in a very tempestuous manner, *by reason of a violent* storm of *wind which blew* hard upon it; *and the vessel was tossed by the* swelling *waves; for the wind was contrary to them*, and had driven them far out of their intended course. 18

19—So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, [in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus] [MARK, saw them toiling in rowing, and cometh unto them walking upon the sea, and

So when they had rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs, or something more than a league [c], *in the* beginning of the *fourth watch of the night*, or about three o'clock in the morning [d], *Jesus*, who knew the distress they were in, *perceiving* that *they were weary with rowing*, and in vain attempted to weather the storm, *came to them, walking on the sea* [e], by his miraculous 19

[a] *Were going to the other side of the sea towards Capernaum.*] This exactly expresses what is said in the *original*: ηρχοντο περαν της θαλασσης εις Καπερναουμ: and I cannot but look upon it as an argument that *Bethsaida* lay on the *east side* of the *sea of Tiberias* (though most of our *maps* have placed it in a different situation,) since *Capernaum* is allowed by all to have been situated on the *western* shore, and is here represented as lying on the *opposite side* to *Bethsaida*, from which they were driven *over the sea to Capernaum*. (Compare *note* 1, *page* 417.) This situation of Bethsaida is likewise confirmed by Josephus, (*Bell. Jud.* lib. ii. cap. 9. (al. 8. § 1,) who calls it by the name of *Julias*; which Pliny also speaks of, as on the *eastern* side of the *lake of Gennesareth*. See *Plin. Nat. Hist.* lib. v. cap. 15, and *Lightfoot's Cent. Chorog. in Mat.* cap. 93.

[b] *Now Jesus was not* yet *come to them.*] It is a great imperfection of our language that we have no proper *copulative particle* but [*and*;] which, is here so much the more unhappy, as in laying together the *whole narration* of the *evangelists*, the use of *that particle* is much more frequent than it would have been in any single one. I choose therefore here, and in some other places, to change it for the word [*now*,] which in this connection signifies almost, if not entirely, the same thing.

[c] *When they had rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs.*] Probably, when they found the wind so violent, they were afraid of being shipwrecked if they came near the shore: and therefore, having perhaps sailed a while before the wind, they now *rowed* out to sea: for, as they must have been *several hours* at sea, one can hardly imagine that with so brisk a gale they made no more way in all this time than a little above a *league*; unless we impute it to their having laboured all they could to avoid crossing the sea and to get to Bethsaida.

[d] *In the fourth watch of the night.*] The *Jewish night* was divided into *four watches*, each containing about *three* of our *hours*, especially so near the *equinox*. The *first* began at *six* in the evening, the *second* at *nine*, the *third* at *midnight*, and the *fourth* at *three* in the morning. (See *Godwin's Moses and Aaron*, book iii. chap. 1.) F. Calmet (in the word *hours*) thinks they learned this division from the Romans. See *Veget. de Re militari*, lib. iii. cap. 8. and *Pitisc. Lexic. in Vigil.*

[e] *Walking on the sea.*] This was thought so impracticable, that the picture of *two feet walking on the sea* was an Egyptian hieroglyphic for an *impossible thing*. And in

SECT. lxxix.

culous power rendering his own body lighter than usual, or strengthening the waves to bear it: *and*, farther to exercise their faith and courage, he seemed, at first, as if he *would have passed by them*. *And when the disciples*, by that little light, which the reflection of the moon on the water afforded them [f], *saw him walking on the sea, and passing near the ship*, not perfectly discerning who it was, *they were* much *terrified, saying, It is* certainly *an apparition*, for no human body could thus be supported by the water: *and they* had such a dread of what might be the consequence, that they *cried out* aloud *for fear*.

Mat. XIV. 26.

Mark VI. 50.

For they all saw him; and, notwithstanding the miraculous power that he had lately given them over evil spirits (Mat. x. 1, p. 388), yet *were* they greatly *troubled*. *And* therefore, to deliver them from that anxiety, *he immediately spoke to them, and said, Take courage*; for *it is I*, your Lord and Master: *be not afraid* of me, who am your Friend; nor of the violent tempest, which cannot hurt you while under my protection.

Mat. VI. 28.

Then, as they knew his voice, they presently began to lay aside their fears; *and Peter*, whose natural temper was remarkably warm and forward, immediately *answering, said unto him, Lord, if it* indeed *be thou*, who art walking on the sea, as I now apprehend it is, I am so far from being afraid of the tempest in thy presence, while I continue in the ship, that I am willing thou shouldest, if thou pleasest, *command me to come to thee* even *upon the water*, and I will im-

29 mediately venture to do it. *And* Jesus, that *he* thus might exercise his faith, and, by convincing him of his weakness, might give a check at the same time to his excessive confidence, complied with his proposal, and *said* to him, If thou hast faith and courage to attempt it, *come* then, and make the trial: *and Peter*, being now assured it was indeed his Master, *came down from the ship, and*, fully satisfied that he was able to uphold and bear him up, *walked on the water* for a

30 while, *to come unto Jesus: But*, soon *perceiving* that *the wind* was very *strong*, and the sea raging with great violence, *he was afraid* of being lost; *and*,

and would have passed by them. [MAT. XIV. 25. MARK VI.—48.]

MAT. XIV. 26. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, [JOHN, and drawing nigh unto the ship] they were [JOHN, afraid] saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.—[MARK VI. 49. JOHN VI.—19.]

MARK VI. 50. For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid. [MAT. XIV. 27. JOHN VI. 20.]

MAT. VI. 28. And Peter answered him, and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And, when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30 But, when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid: and

in the *scripture* it is mentioned as the prerogative of God, that he *alone treadeth upon the waves of the sea*, Job ix. 8.

[f] By that little light, &c.] It is well known that it is never *entirely dark on the water*; not to urge that the *moon* might perhaps now be in the *last quarter*, as it must have been if this was about *three weeks* before the *passover*.

and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

MARK VI. 51. And he went up unto them into the ship; [and when they were come into the ship,] [JOHN, they willingly received him,] and the wind ceased: [JOHN, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went:] and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. [MAT. XIV. 32. JOHN VI. 21.]

52 For they considered not *the miracle* of the loaves, for their heart was hardened.

and, his faith failing him, *he* presently *began to sink*[g], *and cried out* in a great consternation of spirit, *saying*, *Lord*, *save me*, or I shall be swallowed up in a moment. *And immediately Jesus stretching out his hand, laid hold on him; and*, to remind him of his unbelief, *said to him*, *O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt* of my protection, when I was so near; when thou hadst my commission to make the trial, and hadst in part experienced my power in supporting thee thus far on the waves? SECT. lxxix. Mat. XIV. 31

And, taking Peter with him, *he ascended to them into the bark*[h]; *and*, *when they were come aboard*, *they*, that were there, *received him with* the utmost *pleasure*, as the great pledge of their common safety. *And* they quickly found the happy effects of his presence: for all the fury of *the wind* now *ceased* at once; *and*, what was yet more surprising, *the ship was immediately at the* point of *land to which they were going*. *And they were* all *exceedingly amazed in themselves, and astonished beyond measure*[i], as if they had never before seen any exertion of his miraculous power. *For their heart was* so *hardened, and* their mind so insensible, that *they considered not the* yet more wonderful and glorious [*miracle of the*] *loaves*, which but the day before they had seen multiplied in so extraordinary a manner as to display even a creating power[k]. Mark VI. 51. 52

Then

[g] *He began to sink.*] He probably could swim, as most *fishermen* can (compare John xxi. 7.) and perhaps he might venture on the attempt he now made with some secret dependance on his art, which God, for wise reasons, suffered to fail him. The word καταποντίζεσθαι is very expressive, and may intimate that he felt himself *sinking with such a weight* that he had no hope of recovering himself, and expected nothing but that he should go directly to the bottom of the sea.

[h] *Into the bark.*] Though the *evangelists* generally use the word πλοιον, which signifies *any vessel* in which men sail on the sea, I have sometimes varied it a little, in order to prevent that ill effect which the repetition of it so frequently as it occurs would have on the ear in reading; and have here called it *a bark*, that it may not be imagined like our *modern ships*. Accordingly John calls it πλοιαριον, or *a little vessel*; chap. vi. 22. Compare John xxi. 3, 8.

[i] *Exceedingly amazed — and astonished beyond measure.*] The words λιαν εκ περισσου εξισταντο, και εθαυμαζον, are too *emphatical* to be exactly rendered; but this is plainly the sense of them: and the accurate reader will observe that I suppose the words λιαν εκ περισσου to be equally connected with εθαυμαζον and εξισταντο.

[k] As to display even a creating power.] Had not this been done, it is hard to imagine how *twelve baskets full of fragments* could have been taken up: it was therefore in itself (as the *evangelist* plainly intimates) a more certain and glorious *miracle* than the *ceasing of the wind* immediately on his coming into the ship. Their *speedy landing* after this must also have increased their *astonishment*. Considering *this instance*, and *that* of Philip, Acts viii. 39, 40, we have room to admire the *condescension of Christ*, in submitting so often to the fatigues of *journeying on foot* from one place to another, when he could at pleasure have *commanded angels* to *transport* him. With equal ease he could have walked ashore from the waves of the sea, but with a most edifying modesty he avoided the ostentation of it.

SECT. lxxix.

Then they that were about him, even all *that were in the ship, came and worshipped him*, as in a rapture of wonder, devotion and joy, falling down at his feet with the utmost reverence, and *saying*, We are now convinced that *thou art indeed the Son of God*, and hast an unlimited power over the whole creation.

Mat. XIV. 33.

MAT. XIV. 33. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

34 *And, when they had* thus *passed over* the lake, *they came to* a part of *the land of Gennesareth, and put to shore* not far from Capernaum[1], to which, it was observed before (p 418), their course was tending. *And when they came out of the vessel*, as it was a place where Jesus had often been, *they* that were present when he landed, *immediately knew him*: and, though it was so early in the morning, the news of his arrival quickly spread through all the neighbouring parts. For they were ready to inform each other of his coming; *and the men of that place, who knew him*, no sooner were apprised of his arrival, but presently they *sent out, and ran to* every place in *all that country round about*, to give notice to their neighbours, that Jesus was there, and that they now again should have the privilege of his preaching and working miracles among them: *and they began to carry about the sick in beds, and brought unto him all that were diseased, to the place where they heard he was.*

Mark VI. 54.

34 And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, [and drew to the shore.] [MARK VI. 53.]

MARK VI. 54. And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him.

55 [And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out,] and ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick,] and brought unto him all that were diseased,] where they heard he was. [MAT. XIV. 35.]

56 *And* this was indeed the general custom *wherever he* came: as soon as he was *entered into* any *towns, or cities, or country* [*villages*,] *they laid the sick in the* most *public streets* through which they expected he would pass, *and entreated him that they might at least touch the fringe of his garment; and as many as touched him*, believing in his power and his readiness to heal them, *were perfectly recovered*, how extreme soever their illness had been.

56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him, that they might touch, if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made [perfectly] whole. [MAT. XIV. 36.]

IMPROVEMENT.

John VI. 17, 18.

THUS it still pleases *Christ* to exercise the *faith* of his people, that he may strengthen their dependance on him, and demonstrate

1 *To the land of Gennesareth, and put to shore* not far from Capernaum.] The *land of Gennesareth* was a large tract of ground on the *western* shore of the *lake*, in part of which Capernaum appears from hence to have been situated. For, though Matthew and Mark only speak of their *coming to the land of Gennesareth, and putting to shore* there, it is plain, from John's account, that Jesus at his landing came to Capernaum; for it was *there the people found him* that followed him in the morning from the other side of the sea. Compare John vi. 22, 24, 25, in the next *section*, and ver. 59, sect. lxxxii.

strate at once his compassion and his power. Thus are *storms* permitted oftentimes to rise around them, and for a while they are *left in darkness*, and are *tossed with tempests:* but he is *near* at hand, even when they think him at the remotest distance; and when he seems to be *passing by them*, as regardless of their danger and distress, he has designs of grace and mercy to them, and acts in such a way on purpose to quicken and excite them to a greater earnestness and fervour in their applications to him. Happy would the *Christian* be, could he always *discern his Lord* and always conceive of him *aright!* but alas, how often does he appear to the disordered mind as the object of *terror* rather than of *confidence!* and, in a day of *darkness*, while he may seem to treat his suffering people with neglect, instead of seeking him with a more earnest importunity, how are they ready to be overwhelmed with *fears*, and to conclude *he has forgotten them!* SECT. LXXIX. Mark VI. 48. 49

At the *command* of *Jesus*, *Peter* ventured to *go to him on the sea*. And through what storms and dangers may we not safely venture, if we are sure that *our Lord calls us!* Yet the *rebuke*, which he suffered, may warn us not rashly to throw ourselves on *unnecessary trials*, lest our excess of *confidence* end in *fear* and *disgrace*. Modesty and caution will adorn our other virtues, and render us amiable in the eyes of the humble *Jesus*. Mat. XIV. 28, 29. 30

In how many circumstances of life does the *Christian* appear to his own imagination like *Peter beginning to sink* in the waves! But in the time of our distress, like him, let us *cry to Jesus for help;* and, while we are lifting up the hands of *faith* and *prayer*, we may humbly hope that *Christ* will *stretch forth his* omnipotent *arm* for our rescue. Let every experience of this kind, and all the seasonable aid he is from time to time imparting to us, establish our *dependance* on him, and enforce our *obedience* to him, as the *Son of God*. May Divine Grace deliver us from that *hardness of heart*, that stupidity and insensibility of mind, which sometimes remains *unconvinced* in the midst of evidence, and *unaffected* under the most moving illustrations of his *abilities* and *willingness* to help us! 30, 31 32, 33 Mark VI. 52.

SECT. LXXX.

Our Lord, being followed by the multitude to Capernaum, cautions them against those worldly views, with which they sought him, and declares himself to be the bread of life. John VI. 22—40.

John VI. 22.

THE day following when the people, which

John VI. 22.

IN the mean time, while Jesus was thus charitably employed in healing those, who were brought SECT. LXXX. John VI. 22.

SECT. LXXX.

brought to him in the places near the shore, from whence he soon went forwards to Capernaum, *on the morrow* after he had fed the five thousand, great search was made for him by those whom he had sent away the night before: for they were so affected with the miraculous entertainment he had given them, that there were many of *the multitude, who,* though they might withdraw to a little distance on his dismissing the assembly (Mark vi. 46, p. 417), yet still *continued on the other side of the sea* that night, hoping to have another interview with him in the morning; and, *as they saw there was no other vessel there* on the coast, *but that one, into which his disciples entered,* when they departed in the evening, *and* knew *that Jesus did not go with his disciples into the vessel, but that his disciples went away* by themselves, leaving him there to spend the night *alone,* they made no question of his being still on that side of the sea. But in the morning they perceived that he was gone, and presently determined to go after him: and, *though* there were no vessels there the night before, yet were they quickly furnished with an opportunity of following him; for *there came other vessels* very early *from Tiberias,* and put to shore *nigh to the place where they had eat* the *bread* and fishes *after the Lord had given thanks,* and commanded such a miraculous blessing upon them. *The multitude therefore, when they saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there* on that side, *went also themselves* immediately *aboard the vessels,* that were now arrived, as many of them as could, *and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus* with all the appearance of the most eager importunity. *And, when they had found him on the other side of the sea,* in the synagogue of Capernaum (see ver. 59), as soon as the worship was over, and before they quitted the place, *they* accosted him with the greatest respect, and *said unto him, Rabbi, when* and how *camest thou hither?* for, as thou didst not go last night with thy disciples, we expected to have found thee on the other side of the sea, and know not when thou couldest come, or what imaginable way thou couldest have of crossing the water.

John VI. 22.

23 (Howbeit, there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread after that the Lord had given thanks:

24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

26 But *Jesus,* modestly waving the recital of those extraordinary circumstances which attended his passage, diverted the discourse to a yet more important and edifying subject; and, knowing, by an

26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because

SECT. LXXX.

John VI. 26,

cause ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

an intimate penetration of their very hearts, that they were governed only by carnal motives in this attendance upon him, humble and zealous as it might appear, he *answered them* with great solemnity, *and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, You seek me, not because you have seen the miracles*, that I perform, and are convinced by them that I am a Divine Teacher, *but because you have eaten of the loaves and were filled*, and have from thence concluded that you shall make yourselves rich and great by following me. But these are mean and may be fatal views: and I would form you to nobler and wiser sentiments:

27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

27 *labour not* therefore so much *to procure the meat which perishes*, and can only support the mortal part of your nature[a]; *but* rather be solicitous to obtain Divine knowledge and instruction, *that meat which endures to eternal life*, and will nourish your souls to endless felicity; this is that *which the Son of man will* most readily *give you; for him has God the* Great *Father* of all, in mercy to his creatures, sent into the world for this blessed purpose, and *sealed* with this miraculous power, which he daily displays[b], as an authentic proof of his divine mission.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

28 *They therefore*, that they might appear willing to receive his instructions as well as his bounties, *said unto him, What must we do, that we may so work the works of God* as to secure his favour to eternal life?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him, whom he hath sent.

29 *Jesus replying said unto them*, Think not of meriting the Divine favour by any thing you can do yourselves; for *this is the* great *work of God*, which he requires above all things, and which he will be ready to accept, *that you believe on him, whom he has sent*, crediting his message, and venturing your souls upon his power and grace.

Then

a *Labour not to procure the meat which perishes.*] Hardly any one can imagine *our Lord* intended to prohibit men's *labouring* for the subsistence of their *bodies*. Most of those who attended him probably had no other support than their *labour*: but his intent was plainly to declare how much the interest of the *soul* was to be *preferred* to that of the *body*. (See *note* h on Mat. xii. 7, p. 270. Εργαζεσθαι βρωσιν is to *labour to procure meat*.

b *Him has God the Father sealed*] Some have ingeniously conjectured, that this may allude to a *custom* which *princes* might have when making grand *entertainments*, to give a *commission* under their *hand and seal*, or perhaps to deliver a *signet*, to those whom they appointed to *preside* in the management of them: (see *Elsner*, Vol. I. p. 311, 312. Though it may possibly be sufficient to say that *to seal* is a general phrase for *authorising by proper credentials*, whatever the purpose be for which they are given; or for *marking a person out* as wholly devoted to the service of him whose seal he bears.

c Some

SECT. lxxx.

John VI. 30.

Then, though they just before had seen such an astonishing miracle, and several of them lived in the neighbourhood of Capernaum, where he had so long multiplied those wonders, yet some of them were so unreasonable, that *they said to him* after all the miracles that he had wrought [c], If thou wouldest have us to regard thee as invested with so high a character, that far exceeds whatever has been claimed by any one before, thou shouldest produce some signal evidence of a superior kind to all that has been done by others; *what sign therefore shewest thou* from heaven, *that we may see* [it,] *and believe thee? What dost thou perform* more than others, or even equal to what Moses did, that we should treat thee with so extraordinary a regard? Thou didst indeed yesterday feed some thousands of us in an extraordinary manner with barley-bread: but *our fathers*, who were incomparably more numerous than that assembly, *did*, under the conduct of Moses, *eat manna*, a far more delicious food, *in the wilderness*, even forty years; *as it is written* (Psal lxxviii. 24.) "*He gave them bread from heaven to eat;*" and, when thou shalt give us as glorious a demonstration of thy mission, we will pay thee an equal regard.

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work?

31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desart; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 *Then Jesus said to them* again, *Verily, verily, I say*, and affirm it *unto you*, how strange soever it may appear, *Moses gave you not that bread from heaven*, which best deserves so honourable a name; *but* this you are supplied with by *my Father*, who, sending me among you as your Instructor and Redeemer, *giveth you* now *the true* and most excellent *bread from heaven. For that is* indeed *the bread of God*, and may most justly claim the title, *which descendeth from* the highest *heaven* [d], whereas manna fell only from the clouds or the inferior region of the air; *and* which *giveth life* and true happiness *to the* whole *world*

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he, which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

[c] Some of them were so unreasonable that *they said to him.*] The sentiments of those that speak to Christ in this discourse are so various (compare ver. 34, 41, 42), and the *evangelist* so expressly declares that there was a *debate* between some and others of them, ver. 52, that I think it would be wrong to imagine these to have been the perverse and ungrateful sentiments of the *whole multitude*, who had followed him with so much eagerness from place to place for several days.

[d] *That is* indeed *the bread of God, which descendeth from heaven, &c.*] It is necessary to translate ὁ καταβαινων, &c. in this ambiguous manner, that we may not supersede the *explication* which *our Lord* gives in ver. 35. Dr. Clarke has justly observed this; and it is of great importance to apply it to many other passages, where too clear and full a *paraphrase* of what is explained professedly in some subsequent *verses* would only serve to flatten the whole. Compare *note* [c] on Mark iv. 3, sect. lxv.

[e] Some

world of believers, whereas what Moses gave only relieved the temporal necessities of one particular nation.

SECT. lxxx.

John VI. 34.

Then said they him, Lord, ever- give us this

They therefore, when they heard him speaking of so excellent a gift, were presently desirous to obtain it; and, though as yet they did not fully understand what he intended by this bread, some of the wiser and better part of them [e] had such a notion of its excellence, that they *said to him, Lord, give us evermore this bread*, on which our life depends, and let us always live upon this heavenly manna.

And Jesus said them, I am the of life: he that h to me shall hunger; and he elieveth on me ever thirst.

Then, for a farther explication of this impor- 35
tant truth, *Jesus said to them, I am* indeed *the bread of life* [f]; nor is bread so necessary to the support of your bodies, as a believing regard to me is to the life of your souls; *he* therefore *that comes to me* and makes his application aright, *shall never hunger; and he that* truly *believes in me shall never thirst* any more; but may depend upon it that he shall find the most restless desires of his soul satisfied, and, conscious of the noblest refreshment and nourishment already received, shall grow up to a state of everlasting complete satisfaction and enjoyment. *But*, valu- 36
able as these blessings of my grace are, you are little disposed to pursue and accept them: for *I have* already *told you* (ver. 26), *that you have even seen me*, and beheld the miracles, that I perform; *and* yet are so perverse and obstinate that you *believe not* [*in me*,] and will not be prevailed upon to come to me for life and happiness. Nevertheless, though you reject me, yet I shall not 37
be universally rejected, nor shall the purposes of my mission be entirely frustrated; for *all that the Father* has graciously chosen to himself, and whom he *giveth* to *me* in consequence of a peculiar covenant to be sanctified and saved by me, *will* certainly at length *come to me* [g]; *and*, on

But I said unto that ye also have me, and believe

All that the Fa- giveth me, shall to me; and him ometh to me, I no wise cast out.

ome of the wiser and better part of] See before, *note* c on ver. 30.

am the bread of life.] Though indeed ery usual with the sacred writers to ient Divine instructions as *the food of l*, and to compare them to delicious nourishing diet (see Psal. xix. 10; 10; Prov. ix. 5; Job xxiii. 12; xv. 16; and Heb. v. 12, 14); yet I collect no instance in which the *In- or himself*, as such, is called *Food*, or re said to *eat him*; much less in which, ow, they are exhorted to *eat his flesh*, and *drink his blood*: so that Dr. Clarke's laboured and ingenious criticism on this passage (in the xiith of his *Seventeen Sermons*) is far from being satisfactory; and, however clear it may be of any such design, I fear it has misled many to a neglect of that great doctrine of *Christ's atonement*, to which there seems in this *context* so express a reference.

g *All, that the Father giveth me, will come to me*] I have given that sense of this celebrated and important *text*, which on serious, and, I hope, impartial consideration, appeared

SECT. LXXX.

John VI. 37.

on the other hand, if any of you find yourselves disposed to such a believing application to me, you have no reason to be terrified with any suspicion that you are excluded from hope by any secret transactions between the Father and me; for I declare it to you as an universal truth, and perfectly consistent with the former, That *him that cometh to me*, whoever he may be, *I will by no means cast out*[h], nor shall he be rejected or refused on any consideration whatsoever. And you have sufficient reason to believe this, *because I came down from heaven* into this lower world, *not to do my own will*, or to seek any separate interest of my own, *but* to do *the will* and to seek the glory *of him that sent me. And this is the will of the Father who sent me, That of all* the whole body of my people *whom he has given me*, and committed to my care, *I should lose none*, not even the meanest member, *but should* assuredly *raise it up at the last day* in complete glory and happiness. Or, to express it in more general terms, *even this is the will of him that sent me, That every one who views the Son with an attentive eye*[i], *and*, in consequence of that view, cordially *believes on him*, receiving him by faith, and trusting in him as an all-sufficient Saviour, *should have eternal life; and I will* accordingly *raise him up at the last day*, and make him

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, That of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, That every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

appeared to me most agreeable to the words themselves, and to the general tenor of *scripture*. (See especially John xvii. 2, 6, 9, 11, 24.) Mr. Le Clerc's gloss upon them appears to me unnatural, and Dr. Whitby's frivolous.—I do not mean in these *notes* to enter largely into any kind of *controversy;* but dare not suppress or disguise what I am in my conscience persuaded to be the *sense of scripture*, merely because it is not agreeable to the general taste of the age to take it in that view.—I render ηξει *will come*, because the word does not necessarily imply any thing more than the *certainty* of the event; and I would not lead any, merely in dependance on a *translation*, to build a weak argument on the word *SHALL*, which it is well known has sometimes been done.

h *And him that cometh to me*, whoever he may be, *I will by no means cast out.*] To limit this *latter clause* by the *former* is not only missing but contradicting the design of Christ, and destroying the wise and beautiful turn of *this text;* than which I think few more important for stating some great doctrines of the gospel which have unhappily been the foundation of much eager and uncharitable dispute.—The expression ου μη εκβαλω εξω is extremely beautiful and emphatical. It represents an humble supplicant as coming into the house of some prince or other great person to cast himself at his feet, and to commit himself to his protection and care. He might fear his petition might be rejected, and he *thrust out of doors:* but *our Lord* assures him to the contrary. His house and heart are large enough to receive, shelter and supply all the indigent and distressed. God only knows how many thousand souls have been sensibly supported by these gracious words.

i *Every one who views the Son with an attentive eye.*] Thus the words πας, ο θεωρων τον υιον, should undoubtedly be rendered. There are many other places where θεωρειν signifies to *view with attention*. Compare Mat. xxvii. 55. Luke x. 18. xxi. 6. John xvii. 24. Acts iii. 16. and Heb. vii. 4.

him completely happy, both in soul and body, in the enjoyment of a glorious immortality: nor are there any secret purposes and decrees of God inconsistent with the sincerity of such a declaration. SECT. LXXX. John VI. 40.

IMPROVEMENT.

How gratefully should we acknowledge the Divine goodness, Ver.
giving *this true bread from heaven for the life of the world;* and 32, 33
w solicitous should we be, that by a true *faith* we may *feed*
m it! In the midst of so many ensnaring circumstances, let us
strictly watchful over ourselves, that the vigour of our pur-
its and *labours* may not be laid out on the *meat, which perishes,* 27
the forgetfulness of *that, which endures to eternal life:* but
knowledging those authentic *seals,* by which *Christ* is marked
t to that important trust, may we apply to him as *sent of God the* 40
ther to be the Author of eternal salvation, and come to him to
partakers of his saving benefits!
It must surely grieve us to observe the neglect and contempt
th which he is too frequently treated; but it may comfort us
at there yet remains *a remnant according to the election of grace,*
om. xi. 5.) *All that the Father giveth him, will come to him;* 37
d blessed be God, that this appears to be no inconsiderable num-
r. *Secret things belong to the Lord our God,* (Deut. xxix. 29.)
it therefore be our care to *make* first *our calling,* and then, by
happy consequence, *our election sure,* (2 Pet. i. 10.) What-
er discouragements may arise in our way, may we fly to cast
rselves at the foot of *Christ;* and then we may be sure he will
ver on any consideration *cast us out,* but will receive us in the
ms of his almighty compassion, and, having sheltered and main-
ned us in his house on earth, will at length conduct us safely
the presence of his glory and to the blessed abodes of complete
icity!

SECT. LXXXI.

rist having represented himself as the bread of life, enlarges on the necessity and benefit of feeding upon him as such. John VI. 41—58.

John VI. 41.
HE Jews then mur-
mured at him, be-
se he said, I am the
bread

John VI. 41.

THUS did our Lord declare himself to be the bread of life, which God had given them from heaven; but *then,* as this agreed not with their worldly views, *the Jews who were about him* were so far from receiving the declaration SECT. LXXXI. John VI. 41.

SECT. lxxxi.

with a becoming regard, that on the contrary, they took offence and *murmured* at it, *because he said, I am the bread which came down from hea-*

John VI. 41. *ven*, to feed and support the Divine life in the

42 soul. *And*, being strangers to the doctrine of his miraculous conception and Divine nature, *they said* among themselves, *Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we have* long *known*, having lived many years in the neighbourhood? *How* is it *therefore*, that this man should claim so high a character? or how *does he* presume to *say, that I came down from heaven?*

43 *Jesus therefore*, who well knew all their secret suspicions, how artfully soever they might be whispered and concealed, *replied and said unto them, Do not murmur among yourselves* on this occasion; but rather set yourselves seriously to reflect on your present state, and your true interest. I know indeed that your prejudices against me are strong, and without the influences of Divine grace will prove invincible and fatal: for such is the moral blindness and de-

44 generacy of human nature, that *no man can* by a saving faith *come* and make his application *to me, unless the Father who has sent me, draw him* by the sweet but powerful influences of his Holy Spirit on the heart[b]; *and* [*then*] *I will raise him up at the last day*, and finally make him a partaker of the complete felicity and blessedness of

45 my kingdom. For so *it is written in the prophets*, (Isa liv 13 and Jer xxxi. 34.) "*And they shall all be taught by God*[c], by Divine influences

bread which came down from heaven.

42 And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore

a *Whose father and mother we have* long *known.*] Dr. Wells argues from hence that Joseph was *yet alive;* but it may signify only, *We know who his father and mother were.* It is at least certain that Joseph died quickly after; for if *he* had been living, Jesus, when dying on the cross, would not have consigned *his mother* to the care of John. John xix. 26, 27. (Compare *note* b on John ii. 1. sect. xxiii. and Mat. xiii. 55. p. 385.)

b *Unless the Father who has sent me, draw him.*] The sense I have given in the *paraphrase* seems so natural from a view of the words themselves and of their connection, as well as so agreeable to the whole tenor of *scripture*, that I wonder so many learned and ingenious men should have laboured to disguise it by other interpretations. Dr. Clarke explains it as an intimation, that to be well grounded in *natural religion* is the best preparative for receiving the *Christian religion*. But this, though an apparent truth, falls far short of the sense of the passage; especially considering what is afterwards said of being *taught by God*, and not merely *of him*, ver. 45.—The *doctor* observes here, that when in *scripture* one person is said to *draw another*, the word may signify either the *action* of the *person* said to *draw*, or of the *person drawn;* and unhappily produces, John xii. 32. Jer. xxxi. 3. and Hos. xi. 4. all which lie strongly against such a sense. The truth is, *God's drawing* does not exclude *our consent* to follow, and *our activity* in doing it; but it always includes a *Divine agency*. Compare Judg. iv. 7. (See *Dr. Clarke's Sermons*, Vol. III. No. 3.)

c *Taught by God;* διδακτοι θεου.] The word

fore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

fluences on their minds;" and there are many other passages much to the same purpose: (see Isa. ii. 2—5. Mic. iv. 1—4. &c.) *Therefore every one, who has* not only been instructed in the true nature of God, but has both *heard and learned from the Father* himself, by virtue of these internal and efficacious teachings of his grace, *comes unto me*, and cordially receives me under the character I profess. I speak this of an inward Divine teaching, and *not* to insinuate, *that any one* on earth *has seen the Father*, and been taught by him, as one man is by the converse of another: no one has enjoyed such an honour, *except* it be *he*, *who is* come to men as the great Ambassador *from God: He* indeed being statedly resident with him and inseparably united to him, *has seen the Father*, and conversed with him to a degree of intimacy and endearment, which no creature can pretend to have known. In virtue then of those ample instructions I have received from him, *verily, verily, I say unto you*, and testify it as a most sure and important truth, that this is the only method of salvation; and *that* it is *he*, and he alone, *who believes* in me, and reposes himself *on me*, that *hath everlasting life*. Remember therefore, that it is in this respect I tell you, *I am the bread of life*; not only as a Teacher of truth and a Messenger from God to men; but as the Great Redeemer, whom you must receive into your hearts, and on whom you must, as it were, feed by faith, if you indeed would have your life to be supported and secured.

SECT. lxxxi.

John VI. 45.

46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God; he hath seen the Father.

46

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, hath everlasting life.

47

48 I am that bread of life.

48

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead:

And those who thus regard me will receive far more important blessings than Moses, of whom you have now been boasting, could possibly give. For though indeed *your fathers*, under the conduct of that illustrious prophet, *did eat manna in the wilderness*, yet it was not sufficient to maintain their life, *and* they *are* long since *dead: [But] this*, of which I now speak, *is the* true *bread, which cometh down from heaven*, and is of such a nature, *that any one may eat of it, and* have his life so nourished and supported by it, that he shall *not die*, but be assuredly

49

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

50

word properly signifies, they shall be the *disciples* or *scholars of God*, who shall humbly sit down, as it were, at his feet, and receive instructions from him. This, in the *latter text* referred to in the *paraphrase*, is expressly distinguished from *human instructions* relating to the nature of God. Compare 1 Thess. iv. 9.

SECT. LXXXI.

edly delivered from the condemnation and ruin, to which the breach of God's righteous law has subjected every offender.

John VI. 51. Thus then I plainly tell you, how incredible soever you may think it, That *I, who came down from heaven* for this gracious purpose, *am the living bread*, or a principle of Divine life and eternal happiness to all, who shall faithfully receive me: so that *if any one eat of this bread*, in spite of death and the grave, *he shall live for ever. And*, that you may more distinctly conceive this important truth, and see the propriety of this language, I add, That *the bread which I will give* to such a one, *is my* own *flesh, which I will give* as an atoning sacrifice *for the* forfeited *life of the* whole *world* of Jews and Gentiles[d], of which every true believer shall partake.

51 I am the living bread, which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

52 But *the Jews*, whose stupidity often occasioned them to mistake, and whose perverseness led them to wrest his words, did not, or would not, understand him; and *therefore contended with each other*, the generality of them *saying*[e], as if what he had said was to be taken in a literal sense, *How can this man* possibly *give us* [*his*] *flesh to eat?* What a monstrous and unintelligible doctrine is this?

52 The Jews therefore strove amongst themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat?

53 *Then Jesus* replied in the same figurative language he had used before, and, without condescending to any farther explication, *said to them*, However you may censure it as unintelligible and absurd, yet, *verily, verily, I say unto you*, There is no truth more certain in itself, and more important to you; for *unless*, by a cordial dependance on the atonement I shall make, and by the powerful influences of Divine grace upon your hearts, *you eat*, as it were, *the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood*[f], *you have no* principle

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

d *Which I will give for the life of the* whole *world, &c.*] There seems to be a beautiful *gradation* in *this verse*, compared with ver. 31. They had insinuated that *feeding a few thousands with the five loaves* was an inconsiderable thing, when compared with what Moses did, when he *fed the whole camp of Israel*; but *our Lord* declares the purposes of his grace and bounty to be far more extensive, as reaching the *whole world*, and *giving life, immortal life*, to *all* that should believe in him.

e The generality of them *saying.*] Had this been the language of *all*, there could have been no *contention* between them, which yet is expressly asserted.

f *Eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood.*] This phrase naturally expresses a lively and habitual *regard to Christ* as the great support of the *spiritual life*. The mention of *his blood* naturally leads to the thought of his *atonement*, as we are elsewhere told, *We have redemption through his blood*, (Eph. i. 7) and *boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, (Heb. x. 19.) The *sacrament* of the *eucharist* is plainly intended to affect our minds with a sense of these important truths, and *our Lord* might probably think of that intended *institution*, while he spoke: but as this was a future thing, and utterly unknown to his hearers, it seems to me unwarrantable to interpret

principle of spiritual *life in you*, and can have no claim to eternal happiness. For this is so important a part of faith in me, that, to declare the necessity of it, I may say (with such an alteration of my former words, ver. 40), *He* alone, *that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, hath eternal life; and I will* most assuredly *raise him up at the last day*, and shew by his complete deliverance, how just a confidence he has reposed in me amidst all the contempt, with which you treat me. *For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed*[k]; and nothing deserves the name so well, as nothing is worthy of being called life, in comparison of that which is hereby supported. For this feeding upon me is such, that *he who* thus *eats my flesh and drinks my blood, abides in me* by an intimate and inseparable union, *and I* abide *in him*[l] by the unalienable tokens of my favour and love to nourish the Divine life in his soul: I say by the unalienable tokens of it; for *as the living Father*, the great source of life, *has sent me* into the world, *and I live by* the protection and care of *the Father*[i] who is continually dwelling in men, and communicating of his Spirit in the richest abundance to me: *so he that* thus *eateth me, even he shall live by me*, through the Spirit, which I will also communicate to him. And if you attend to these important hints that I have given, you may in general know what I meant, by saying as I have done, *This is the bread that came down from heaven*: and by adding (ver. 49, 50,) that it is *not* in this case, *as* it was with *your fathers*, who

SECT. lxxxi.

John VI. 54.

55

56

57

58

oso eateth and drinketh hath eternal I will raise the last day.

my flesh is ed, and my ink indeed.

that eateth . and drink- ood, dwell- and I in him.

the living th sent me, e by the Fa- e that eateth he shall live

is that bread ame down ven: not as ers did eat manna

his text as chiefly referring to *that* and nothing can be more pre- an many consequences, which n drawn from it in that view, me of them be authorised by very es.

sh is meat indeed, and my blood is ed.] It might more literally be *Is truly meat, and is truly drink*; nse in which the word [*indeed*] ed, gives a kind of *paraphrase* on . Just in this sense, *the true light* 't *excellent light*, (John i. 9.) *the* s the *most noble vine* (John xv. 1.) *e bread* is the *most excellent and bread*. See above, ver. 32.

s in me, and I in him.] After ds, the Cambridge manuscript, f Stephens's, add, *As the Father nd I in the Father, verily, verily, you, Except ye receive the body of the Son of man as the bread of life, ye have no life in you.* Dr. Mill (in his notes here) seems to approve the *addition*; but I think Dr. Whitby has so fully proved it to be *spurious*, that I content myself with referring the reader to him (see his *Examen Millii.* p. 49) and to *Wolfius* on this text (*Cur. Philol.* Vol. I. p. 865, 866.)

i *I live* by the protection and care of *the Father.*] The *human* and derived nature of Christ had, no doubt, the same *dependance* on the providence and influence of God that other creatures have: and though Christ as Mediator has *life in himself* (as it was said before, John v. 26, sect. xlvii.), yet was it *given him of the Father*, and it is he that qualifies Christ by his Spirit for the great work, for which he sent him into the world: and he accordingly is elsewhere represented as *upholding him* in it. Isa. xlii. 1. Compare John viii. 29, and xvi. 32.

k *Not*

SECT. LXXXI.

who *did eat manna* in the wilderness, *and* yet *are dead*[k], without having found any efficacy in it to communicate a spiritual or secure an eternal life; [*but*] *he that eats this bread, shall live for ever.*

manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread, shall live for ever.

John VI. 58.

IMPROVEMENT.

41, 52 THE *hearers* of *Christ murmured*, and perversely objected *against his doctrine.* Let not *ministers* now wonder, if the like capricious humour sometimes prompts *their hearers* to seek occasion of *offence*, where there is none: let them learn of their great *Master in meekness*, to *instruct those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the*
44, 45 *truth*; (2 Tim. ii. 25.) *Our Lord* expressly asserts the necessity of being *taught* and *drawn by the Father*, in order to our knowing him, and *coming to him.* Let us therefore humbly seek these influences *ourselves*, and fix our dependance upon them in all our attempts upon *others*, for their conversion and edification.

48, 51 *Christ* here gives us *line upon line*, and *precept upon precept*, to
53, 54 illustrate and enforce this important doctrine of the necessity of regarding him as the *bread of life*, and of feeding by faith on his *flesh and blood*, which he has *given for the life of the world.* Let us, as we desire any part in his saving blessings, most thankfully
55 receive *his flesh* as *meat indeed*, and *his blood* as *drink indeed.* May God be merciful to those that call themselves *Christians*, and yet are strangers to such a believing intercourse with *Christ*, and to the
56, 57 derivation of *spiritual life* from him! If this be *enthusiam*, it is the enthusiasm of *scripture*; and the denial of forgetfulness of these important doctrines, is like a fatal *palsy* to the soul, which chills, as it were, all its nerves, and destroys at once its sensibility and vigour, its pleasure and usefulness.

To represent and inculcate these great truths, our *Lord* afterwards instituted the *sacrament of his supper*, in which we not only commemorate his sufferings, but our own concern in them. It is the language of every intelligent approach to it, that we acknowledge *the life of our souls* to depend on the *merit of his atonement*, and the *communications of his grace.* This is *eating his flesh*, and
58 *drinking his blood*: may we be nourished by it to *eternal life!*

Then

[k] *Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead.*] This *version* of the words is perfectly agreeable to the original; ουκ καθως εφαγον οι πατερες υμων το μαννα. But I should not perhaps have taken too great a liberty, had I avoided the *ellipsis* in the Greek, and ventured to reduce it to a plainer form, by rendering it, *Not like that manna which your fathers did eat, and are dead.* So Grotius has explained this passage; and though it does not so exactly answer to the Greek, and cannot pass for a *literal translation*, it plainly expresses the sense of the place, and the words run more natural and easy. See *Grotius in loc.*

a *As*

Then though this mortal part of our nature drop into the dust, our *souls will live* and triumph; nor shall our *bodies* finally perish but be *raised up by Christ* in the great day, to take their part in the full *joy of our Lord.* There these *intermediate ordinances* shall cease, and copious uninterrupted streams of Divine *teachings*, and Divine *influences*, shall sweetly flow in upon our ever improving, active, rejoicing minds! SECT. LXXXI.

SECT. LXXXII.

Christ having declared that the foregoing discourse was to be taken in a spiritual sense, is forsaken by many of his disciples; and while the apostles assure him of their continued fidelity, he intimates the treachery of Judas. John VI. 59, *to the end.*

JOHN VI. 59.

THESE things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

JOHN VI. 59.

THESE things, which had been now delivered by our Lord, *he spake* before all sorts of hearers *in the synagogue, as he was teaching at Capernaum*[a]: and, for wise reasons, he involved a part of his discourse in figurative and mysterious language; as in particular, that which related to eating his flesh, and drinking his blood. SECT. LXXXII. John VI. 59.

60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying, who can hear it?

Many therefore of those who followed him as *his disciples, having heard* [*it*,] *said, This is a difficult* and strange *discourse*; and *who can hear* or understand *it?* In its literal sense it is plainly absurd, and we know not, what other interpretation to give it. 60

61 When Jesus knew in himself, that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

But Jesus knowing in himself, that his disciples murmured about it, though they did not speak out their objections and scruples, *said unto them Does this*, which you have just now heard, so much *offend you?* and do you stumble at it as incredible? 61

62 *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

[*What*] *then, if ye shall see the Son of man ascending up* into heaven, *where he was before*[b]? would you then understand what was meant by the bread of life coming down from thence, 62

a *As he was teaching at Capernaum.*] Probably (as was hinted above, ver. 25, p. 424.) the foregoing discourses were introduced after the reading of the law, and prayer. We are not to wonder at the *dialogue* which passed here: there are many other instances of *disputes* which either Christ or his *apostles* had with the *Jews in their synagogues.* See Mat. xii. 9. & *seq.* sect. l. Luke xiii. 10. & *seq.* sect. cxvii. Acts xiii. 44. & *seq.* and xvii. 17.

b *Ascending up* into heaven, *where he was before.*] A very celebrated writer thinks this refers to *the Son of man appearing to Daniel in the clouds of heaven*: but his *appearing* to him thus *in vision* was no more an argument of *his being there* at the time of that appearance, than the appearance of the *symbols* of the Greek and Roman *empires* was an argument of *their existence* at that time.

c Would

SECT. lxxii.

John VI. 63.

thence, as the food of the world? Or would you then believe that I came from heaven, notwithstanding the objection you have made as to the meanness of my parentage?[c] Thus our Lord intimated his intended ascension; and in the mean time, as a key to his former discourse, he added, As in the human frame *it is the* indwelling *Spirit that quickens* every part of it; and *the flesh*, how exactly soever organized and adorned, if separate from that, *profits nothing*, but is an insensible and inactive corpse; so also *the words which I speak unto you, are spirit*, that is, they are to be taken in a spiritual sense, *and* then you will find they *are life* to your souls; whereas to take them in a literal sense, would be most unprofitable and monstrous. It is indeed strange that you should think of it; *but* I know *there are some of you who believe not*, and would shelter your infidelity under these mean and disingenuous cavils. This he plainly told them: *for Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed*, and who did *not; and* even knew the very person *who it was, that* at last *should* so basely *betray him.*

63 It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

65 *And he* farther *said, For this reason I told you,* (ver. 44.) *that no man can come unto me, except it be given him of my Father*[d]; because I know that the prejudices of corrupt nature lie strongly against such a doctrine as I publish, and that nothing but Divine grace will subdue them.

65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

66 *From this time many*, who had borne the name *of his disciples*, abusing and misrepresenting what he had now delivered, as if it had been either absurd or utterly unintelligible, *went back and walked no more with him;* plainly perceiving that their true character was now discovered, as well as that their secular views were disappointed.

66 From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

67 *Jesus therefore said unto the twelve* apostles, *Will you also go away?* The multitude are gone, and will you also follow them, and leave me entirely alone? Choose for yourselves; for I desire not

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

c Would you then believe, that I came from heaven, &c.] What Christ here says of his *ascension* may be farther intended to intimate the necessity of taking his discourse in a *figurative sense*, as it would so soon be evidently impossible to *eat his flesh*, which was to be received into heaven.

d *Except it be given him of my Father.*] To be *drawn by the Father*, (ver. 44.) and to *have faith given him by the Father*, are evidently *synonymous* terms; which plainly vindicates the interpretation given above, and shews how far the loose and general glosses of Dr. Clarke and Dr. Clagget are from expressing the true and determinate sense of *our Lord's* words.

e *Have*

n Simon Peter him, Lord, to hall we go? the words of e.

not to detain you against your will. *Then* SECT. lxxxii. *Simon Peter*, with his usual zeal, *answered him*, *Lord, to whom should we go*, if we were really John VI. 68. disposed to quit thee? or what advantage could we expect by it? *Thou hast the words of eternal life*, and hast even now been directing us in the way to it; and God forbid that any other hopes and views should ever be preferred by us to these!

d we believe are, that thou Christ, the e living God.

However others may be governed by their carnal 69 prejudices, *and* a deluded multitude may treat thee with contempt, *we* firmly *believe*, *and* assuredly *know*, on the most convincing evidence, *that thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God*; in which persuasion we are determined to hazard all in thy service, and to sacrifice even our lives to thee.

s:is answered ave not I chotwelve, and u is a devil?

Jesus then *answered them*, Such a resolution 70 might reasonably be expected from you all; for *have I not chosen you twelve* to the honour of a peculiar intimacy with me, and to a station of the most distinguished eminence and importance in the church? And *yet* I know, that *one of you is a devil*, and, under the influence of that malignant spirit of darkness, will turn my accuser and betrayer [f].

: spake of Juior, *the son* of for he it was ld betray him, one of the

This *he spake concerning Judas Iscariot* [*the* 71 *son*] *of Simon; for* it was *he* who at that time began to harbour in his breast this execrable purpose, and *had* then *thoughts of betraying him* [g]; *though he was one of the twelve* apostles, and therefore under peculiar obligations to fidelity and duty.

IMPROVE-

:e *I not chosen you twelve? &c.*] t the least reason with Elsner to : the *note of interrogation*, and ren*have not chosen you* all; which ntirely enervate the spirit of the g clause.

accuser and betrayer.] According .ocke, *our Lord* intimates that this reason why he had not more plainly himself to be the Messiah, because r Judas would have accused him of against the Romans; (for so the ἀντίδικος does sometimes signify, *a user*; see 1 Tim. iii. 11. 2 Tim. nd Tit. ii. 3.) But I can see no at Judas, from the beginning, into *betray Christ*. It is more probable he at first engaged with him in expectation of secular advantage; and finding those views disappointed, he might now begin to form that detestable scheme which he afterwards executed. If this was the occasion on which he first entertained the thought (as I think it probably might,) one would imagine that such an intimation of his secret wickedness must have struck him to the heart.

[g] *Had thoughts of betraying him.*] The words ημελλεν αυτον παραδιδοναι, may properly, though not necessarily, import thus much; and, I think, had not this been actually the case, Christ would not have said he *is a devil*, but rather that he would become one.

a Which

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. lxxxii. WE have, through the Divine goodness, been made acquainted with those *gospel-truths*, in their full evidence, and mutual connection, which were more obscurely hinted to those who attended John VI. 60. on *Christ's* personal ministry: may we therefore hearken to the 63 *spiritual sense* of this sublime and excellent discourse! And as 62 the credible account of his *ascension into glory* is now added to the rest, let us receive the whole of his doctrine with the most humble submission: earnestly intreating the influences of Divine grace, 65 that we may not only be *drawn to Christ*, but be so *firmly attached* to his interest, that whoever else *forsake him*, we may *never go away*. On the contrary, may we rather collect an argument from 67 their ingratitude and folly, more strenuously and more affectionately to *adhere* to him! Indeed *to whom should we go*, but to 68 him? *He has the words of eternal life.* From him therefore, in all lowly subjection of soul, may we learn those lessons on which our everlasting happiness depends!

70 May we never, like *Judas*, conceal a treacherous and disaffected heart, under the specious appearance of piety and goodness! This 64, 71 would be only imposing on ourselves; for his penetrating eye can never be *deceived*. May we approve the integrity of our souls in his sight, and repose an unlimited confidence in him, as 69 one whom *we believe and know* to be a Divine Saviour, *Christ the Son of the living God!*

SECT. LXXXIII.

Our Lord vindicates his disciples in neglecting the traditions of the Pharisees, and condemns those corrupt teachers for preferring such traditions to the precepts of the Divine law. Mat. XV. 1—9. Mark VII. 1—13.

MARK VII. 1.

SECT. lxxxiii. THE miracles which Jesus wrought, and which have been mentioned above [a], being Mark VII. 1. reported at the ensuing passover [b], gave a farther alarm

MARK VII. 1. THEN came together unto [Jesus] the Pharisees

a Which have been mentioned above.] As both Matthew and Mark introduce the following discourse immediately after his *crossing the sea to Capernaum*, when he but just before had *fed the five thousand*, and John determines the *debates* in the *preceding sections* to that time, there can be no reasonable doubt about placing *this section*, and several more that are expressly connected with it, in this *order*.

b At the ensuing passover.] That a *passover* followed quickly after the events before related, is expressly determined: (see John vi. 4, and the *note* there, p. 412, and compare chap. vii. 2.) But the *evangelists* do not exactly determine whether Christ did or did not attend it. If he did not, we may conclude he had proper reasons for not doing it: but, to be sure, such numerous and public *miracles*, as he had lately performed, would be the subject of a great deal of discourse at Jerusalem. Compare John vii. 11, 12, and xi. 56.

c Almost

Pharisees and certain of the scribes, which [were of, *and*] came from Jerusalem. [MAT. XV. 1.]

alarm to the Jews, and especially to their established teachers; so that to obviate the effect of them, and to prevent the success of his ministry, *there were then gathered unto Jesus the Pharisees, and some of the scribes, who were* stated inhabitants *of Jerusalem, [and] came [from thence]* on purpose to watch, and if possible, to ensnare him. *And*, as they looked on all his actions with a most malignant eye, they soon found an opportunity to cavil; for *seeing some of his disciples eat bread with* what they counted *polluted (that is, with unwashed) hands, they found fault* with them among themselves.

Mark VII. 1.

2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled (that is to say, with unwashen) hands, they found fault.

2

3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

For this was a favourite tenet of *the Pharisees*, on which they laid a particular stress, *and* indeed almost *all the Jews* pay a considerable regard to it[c], that they *do not* allow themselves to *eat without washing their hands often* with abundance of exactness[d], and particularly just before their meals: and this they observe, not in consequence of any express Divine command, but as *holding the tradition of the elders*, who thought this scrupulous care a decent expression and memorial of their concern to keep themselves free from whatsoever might pollute them. *And* especially *[when they come] from the market*, or any other place of public concourse, lest they should without their knowledge have touched any thing unclean, *they eat not, till they have washed* their hands at least, if not their whole body. *And there are many other things*, besides the washing of their hands, *which they* in like manner *receive and maintain* by the authority of the same tradition, *[as] the washing of cups and pots* in which their food is put, *and* of the *brasen vessels* made use of in preparing it, *and* even of the very *couches* on which they lie at their meals.

3

4 And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.

4

Then

c Almost *all the Jews* pay a considerable regard to it.] Their *rabbies* carried this to a most ridiculous height; one of them determining the *neglect of washing* to be a *greater sin* than *whoredom*; and another saying, it would be *much better to die*, than to *omit it*. Many instances of this kind may be seen in *Dr. Whitby* and *Dr. Hammond in loc.* and in *Buxtorf. Synag. Jud.* cap. XI. p. 236. It is plain, that other nations commonly used to *wash before their meals*. See *Athenæus*, p. 408, Edit. Casaub. 1675, and *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 73.

d *Washing their hands often.*] The word πυγμη is ambiguous, being very seldom used. Theophylact's gloss would incline one to render it, as L'Enfant does, *up to the elbows*; and Beza translates it *with the fist*. (See *Godwyn's Moses and Aaron*, lib. i. cap. 10, p. 39.) Not being able certainly to determine the point, I thought it sufficient to add in the *paraphrase, with abundance of exactness*. *Camero*, and *Lud. Cappellus (in loc.)* explain it of *holding up their hands closed*, while the water was poured upon them; and I have nothing to object to the reasons they give for that interpretation.

SECT. lxxxiii.

Mark VII. 5.

Then the Pharisees and Scribes, after they had censured the disciples of Christ among themselves (as was observed before), came to Jesus, and *asked him, Why do not thy disciples walk* and behave themselves *according to the tradition of the elders*, as other pious and regular Jews do; *but transgress* [*it*] in a very obvious and material instance, *for they eat with unwashed hands*[e]? Can they be so ignorant as not to know the traditions that forbid it? Or are they so profane as not to regard them?

5 Then the Pharisees and Scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but [transgress *it*, for they] eat bread with unwashen hands? [MAT. XV. 2.]

Mat. XV. 3.

Mark VII. 9.

And he answering, said unto them, Nay, but I may with much greater reason ask you, *Why do you also transgress* what is infinitely more sacred, even *the command of God* himself, *out of regard to your* own vain and superstitious *tradition?* And this, in several instances, you run to such a length, as that *you fairly make void the command of God*, and render it insignificant, *that you may observe your tradition*; though you consider not perhaps from whence it comes, or may easily know that it was derived only from a fallible man. I will give you one notorious instance of it, which you cannot dispute: *for* you well know that *God has commanded* [*by*] *Moses, saying*, "*Honour thy father and thy mother:*" A precept written with his own finger on the tables of stone, *and* guarded by that awful sanction, "*Whoso curseth* his *father, or* his *mother, let him surely die* without mercy." (See Exod. xxi. 17. Lev. xx. 9. and compare Prov. xx. 20. and Deut. xxvii. 16.) Now for any one to suffer his parents to languish in want of the necessary supplies of life, must certainly be a yet more aggravated wickedness, than an impious word, which may possibly escape a man's lips in a sudden transport of passion[f].

MAT. XV. 3. But he answered and said unto them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? [MARK VII. 9.—]

MARK VII.—9. Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Mat. XV. 4.

MAT. XV. 4. For God [by Moses] commanded, saying, Honour thy father and [thy] mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. [MARK VII. 10.]

Mark VII. 11.

But what you teach is contradictory to this Divine command; and an ungrateful child may justify himself in the neglect of it, in consequence of your tradition: for *you assert*, [*that*] *any one may*

MARK VII. 11.—But ye say, [Whosoever]

e *For they eat with unwashed hands.*] It is, in the *original*, *eat bread*; and I have sometimes retained the *Hebraism*, but did not think it necessary always to do it. Every attentive reader must have observed that *food in general* is called *bread* in a multitude of places; and bread is sometimes put even for the provisions of a royal table, 2 Sam ix. 7, 10, and xii. 20.

f In a sudden transport of passion.] *Dr. Lightfoot* (in his *Hor. Heb. in loc.*) has well observed, that it is probable a *child* must be in a transport of very undutiful *passion*, when he made the rash vow afterwards mentioned, that he would *never* in any instance *relieve his parent*, so that it was a kind of *cursing him*: but had it been said ever so coolly and deliberately, the argument here suggested would have taken place, and would have justified the connection.

g *Any*

ever] shall say to *his* father or mother, *It is* corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, [and honour not his father or his mother,] *he shall be free.* [MAT. XV. 5, 6.—]

12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother.

MAT. XV.—6. Thus have ye made the [word *and*] commandment of God of none effect [through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.] [MARK VII. 13.]

may say to his father or mother, [*Let that be*] *corban, that is to say,* let it be reckoned as a devoted thing, or be considered as *a gift* dedicated to the altar[g], *by which thou mightest* otherwise *receive advantage from me*[h], *and he shall* then be free from the command, and *not* be under any obligation to *honour* and relieve *his father or his mother.* *And* in this manner, out of regard to such a rash and impious vow, *you* not only suppose he may innocently omit this evident duty of natural as well as revealed religion, but will *no more permit him to do any thing for* the relief even of *his father or his mother.* *And* [*thus*] then it is evidently to be seen, according to the charge which I advanced against you, that, through a gross and impious superstition, *you have* even *invalidated the word,* [*and,*] as it were, annihilated *the command of God, by* means of *your tradition, which you have delivered* as a rule of life to be observed with the most scrupulous exactness: *and* it were easy to be shewn, in other instances, that *many such like things you do.*

SECT. lxxxiii.

Mark VII. 11.

12

Mat. XV. 6.

7 Ye hypocrites, well

Yet these are the things in which you vainly pride yourselves, as proofs of your religion; but, *O you*

7

[g] *Any one may say,* [*Let that be*] *corban, that is to say, a gift.*] So I choose with *Elsner,* (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 74.) to render the words in Matthew, ος αν ειπη, though, I confess, not without some doubt. But I think it is best to leave as little as possible to be *supplied* in order to make up the sense; and on that principle I should prefer the *addition* in our own *translation* of this place, *he shall be free,* to that which Sir Norton Knatchbull proposes, who would render it, *You say,* [*a man honours his parents,*] *if he say, It is corban, &c.* thus supposing the passage to imply a repetition from the verse before. But such a construction seems to me quite unparalleled, and very unnatural. Grotius makes και, *redundant,* and would render it, *You teach, that whosoever shall say to his father or mother, It is a gift, &c.—let him not honour his father and mother:* but in the way that I have rendered it, the sense is in effect the same, and the common sense of και is retained.—Some considerable *critics,* particularly *Drusius* (*de Tribus Sectis,* lib. ii. cap. 17.) and *Godwyn* (*Moses and Aaron,* lib. vi. cap. 6.) give a very elegant turn to the following words, δωρον ο εαν εξ εμου ωφληθης, and would suppose them to be *an oath* expressed in the *elliptical* manner, which was very common among the Hebrews: if so, they should be rendered, *I swear by corban,* or the sacred treasury, *thou shalt receive no benefit from me.* But as both the *evangelists* insert the *particle* ο, which in this construction has no force, I cannot wholly approve *this version,* and therefore did not insert it. Perhaps some of these pretended *vows* of theirs amounted to no more, than an obligation to leave some proportion of the overplus of their estates to the *temple treasury* after their death, which might in a thousand instances be made the cloak of avarice and cruelty. The indeterminate manner of speaking, it must be owned, would lead to such a supposition. Cappellus with immense labour (and, I think, beyond all farther controversy) has asserted the interpretation of this text as given in the *paraphrase;* and has produced a vast variety of passages from the Talmud, to shew the superstitious regard the Jews had to such rash and unnatural *vows,* as well as the ridiculous ways they sometimes took to evade them. See *Lud. Cappell. in Mat.* xv. 5.

[h] *Advantage from me.*] Sir Norton Knatchbull would render εξ εμου, *of my substance,* or possession: but had this been the exact rendering, it would have been εκ του εμου, of which instances occur in Greek authors.

[i] *While*

SECT. lxxxiii.

Mat. XV. 7. *O you hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of* such as *you*, and very fitly may those words which he delivers in the name of God be applied to you, where he is *saying* of the superstitious Jews of his own time, what may be evidently seen to agree to you, *(as it is written*, Isa. xxix. 13.)

well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, [as it is written,] [MARK VII.—6.]

8 "*This people draweth near to me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips;* they make a pompous profession, and pretend to a great deal of devotion and piety; *but* it plainly appears, that *their heart is far estranged from*

Mark VII. 7. *me.*" Notwithstanding all your talk, then, of strictness in religion; *yet* as this appears to be expressive of your real character, the doom of hypocrites belongs to you; and God may justly affirm of such (as it is added there), "*In vain do they worship me, while they teach doctrines* or lessons [*that are*] merely *human* inventions and *injunctions*[i], being only the precepts of men, that have no stamp of the Divine authority upon them," which yet they would insist upon as necessary parts of religion, and would impose

8 them on the consciousness of others. And this (as I have said) you may be charged with, not in one single instance only, but in many; *for, leaving the commandment of God, you maintain the tradition of men,* [*relating to*] *the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things you do,* with a zeal by no means required, and on which at best you lay a very disproportionable stress.

8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.—[MARK VII.—6.]

MARK VII. 7. Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. [MAT. XV. 9.]

8 For, laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. XV. 9. How miserable is the case of those who, while they earnestly contend for the *forms* of *Divine worship*, are losing both the improvement and reward, which might be expected from a regular

8 attendance upon it! This is the case of all, who *draw near to God with their lips*, while *their hearts are far from him.* May we abhor the vanity of such hypocritical behaviour in the presence of Him, who *searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men.*

Let

i *While they teach doctrines that are human injunctions.*] So I render διδασκοντες διδασκαλιας ενταλματα ανθρωπων. The words seem to allude to Isa. xxix. 13, where, though the present *Hebrew copies* read the text to our *translation* of the place, *Their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men*, Grotius has shewn how a small variation in the *original* might justify the *seventy* in that *version* of theirs, which the *evangelist* here follows, the sense of which is much the same with what we retain in that place. I would only observe farther, that διδασκαλια in general signifies *any lesson*, and not merely (as Bishop Hopkins contends) *a doctrine of faith*; and that the purpose to which *our Lord* here applies it, plainly shews that it must refer to *ritual injunctions.* See *Bishop Hopkins's Works*, p. 150, 151.

Let us learn from this just and severe sentence which *our Lord* passes on these superstitious *Pharisees*, to avoid the temper he condemns in them. It much less becomes us as *Christians*, and especially as *protestants*, to *impose* on our brethren with rigorous severity those *doctrinal decisions*, or those *ritual observances*, which have not their express foundation in the *word of God*, to which we so constantly appeal as to our common rule. Happy had it been for the church in all ages and nations, had men exerted that zeal for the *truths* and the *institutions* of God in the beauty and glory of their native simplicity, which has carried them on to defend and propagate their *own inventions*, till religion itself has almost sunk under the weight of the ornaments in which they have dressed it, and the unwieldy armour which they have hung about it! SECT. LXXXIII. Mat. XV. 3, 7.

Let *children* learn from the *command* which *Christ* has vindicated, to *honour their parents* by a tender care of them in their declining days; remembering, that as no filial duty and gratitude can ever fully repay our obligations to such friends, so an affectionate regard to them is a proper and necessary expression of our filial piety to the great *Father of our spirits*. Justly may he esteem his *temples profaned*, rather than *adorned*, by the most costly *gifts*, which are the *spoils of nature*, and the *trophies of inhumanity*. 4—6

SECT. LXXXIV.

Christ pursues his discourse against the Pharisees, and inculcates the necessity of inward purity. Mat. XV. 10—20. Mark VII. 14—23.

Mark VII. 14.

AND when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand. [Mat. XV. 10.]

Mark VII. 14.

NOW when our Lord had thus condemned the Pharisees to their face, for the unwarrantable stress they laid on their vain and precarious traditions, he took this opportunity to undeceive the people, and to let them see how insignificant this outward strictness was, on which the Pharisees insisted; *and having called all the multitude together to him, he* pursued his discourse, and *said to them, Let* me charge *every one of you* attentively to *hearken to me* in what I now deliver, *and* give all diligence that you may *understand* it; lest for want of doing it, out of regard to your admired teachers, you impose on your own souls in a matter of the greatest importance. *There is nothing which enters into a man from without, that can* really *pollute him* in the sight of God: it is *not*, I say, *that which* is originally from without, and *goes into the mouth*, that SECT. LXXXIV. Mark VII. 14. 15

15 There is nothing from without a man, that, entering into him, can defile him; [not

SECT. lxxxiv. Mark VII. 15.

that renders him polluted [a]; *but the things which come out of a man are those that* actually *defile him, [even] that which comes out of [his] mouth.* And I would have you to observe, that much is comprehended in these few important words.

[not that which goeth into the mouth,] but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man, [*even* that which cometh out of the mouth.] [MAT. XV. 11.]

16 remember them therefore, and think of them; and *if any one* of you *has ears to hear*, and a heart to consider, *let him hear* these things, and reflect seriously upon them.

16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17 *And when he was come into the house* apart *from the multitude, his disciples came* to him, according to their usual custom, [*and*] *asked him concerning the* meaning of this *parable*, or sententious, and, to them, obscure saying. *And they* likewise *said to him* at the same time, *Knowest thou*, and art thou sufficiently aware of it, *that the Pharisees, who heard this saying, were* highly *offended* at it, as what appears to strike directly (as they represent the matter) both at the authority of the oral and of the written law?

Mat. XV. 12.

17 And, when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples [came, *and*] asked him concerning the parable; [MAT. XV. 12.—]

MAT. XV.—12. And said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

13 *But he answered and said*, As for their displeasure, I am very little concerned about it, nor shall I ever labour to ingratiate myself with persons of their character: for I consider them as a set of men doomed to destruction: and indeed *every plantation which my heavenly Father has not planted*, and every thing in religion, which, like the vain traditions they advance, is not founded in Divine institution, but human invention, *shall* sooner or later *be rooted up*, and cast out of the vineyard, as an incumbrance to it.

13 But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

14 *Let them alone*, and do not trouble or concern yourselves about their censures; *they are blind guides of the blind* populace, that implicitly commit themselves to their conduct: *and* it is very easy to foresee the consequence; for, *if the blind* shall undertake to *lead the blind, they will both fall into a ditch* together, and incumber instead of helping each other (compare Luke vi. 39, p. 290); and so will these perverse Pharisees, and their careless followers, perish together.

14 Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind: and, if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

15 *But Peter answering said unto him*, We would desire thee, however, to *explain* more clearly *to us* what is the meaning of *this parable* which they

15 Then answered Peter, and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.

[a] *Not that which goes into the mouth*, &c.] Though it is very true a man may bring guilt upon himself by *eating* what is pernicious to his health, or by *excess* in the quantity of food and liquor; and a Jew might have done it by presumptuously *eating* what was *forbidden* by the *Mosaic law*, which still continued in force: yet in all these instances the *pollution* would arise from the *wickedness of the heart*, and be just proportionable to it; which is all *our Lord* asserts.

[b] Corrupt

they are so much offended at; for even we ourselves are at a loss to reconcile it, not only with the Pharisaic traditions, but with the injunctions of the law of God, which hath so expressly enjoined a difference of meats. SECT. lxxxiv. Mat. XV. 15.

II. 18. And
'unto them.
so yet] so
erstanding?
[yet] per-
whatsoever
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file him?
. 16, 17—]

And Jesus said to them, Are you likewise still so void of understanding, as not to apprehend the sense of what I said? by which you might have easily perceived, that I did not intend immediately to supersede any precept of the law relating to the distinction of clean and unclean food; but only to declare that it is the temper of the mind which God regards, and that no external accident, separate from this, can render a man offensive to him: and, after all the instructions I have given you, *do you not yet perceive* that it must needs be so, *that whatsoever enters from without into a man, cannot defile him?* And that for this obvious reason, *because whatsoever enters in at the mouth, enters not into his heart*, or mind, in which sin or holiness is seated, and which alone is capable of moral excellence or pollution; *but goes into the belly, and*, passing through the bowels, by the course of natural digestion and evacuation, *is thrown off into the vault*, a place *which cleanses*, as it were, and carries off the grosser dregs of *all* the *food* that a man eats. Mark VII. 18. 19

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heart; but
) the belly,
out] into
, purging
MAT. XV.

he said,
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man: [*for*
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MAT. XV.

But, said he, It is indeed, *that which comes out of a man, that* really *defiles a man*, and makes him sinful in the sight of God, as it originally proceeds from within: [*for*] *the things proceeding out of the mouth, come forth from the heart; and* these are *they* that actually *defile a man*, as they must thus be tainted with a great deal of moral guilt and malignity. *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed* all such corrupt and *evil reasonings*[b], as those of the Pharisees which you have now been hearing, and all those self-invented sophisms which exclude wisdom at the first entrance; and from hence also proceed *adulteries* and *fornications*, and all sorts of sensuality 20 21

rom with-
the heart
ceed evil
adulteries,
, murders,
. 19.—]

t and *evil reasonings*, οι διαλογισμοι.] I choose to render it *ngs*, rather than merely *evil* better suiting both the *original* *sion*, and as containing a more nd important truth; for those ly *defile the heart*, which it wilts, and does, as it were, hold a parley and converse with. And, I fear, there are multitudes in the present age, like these Pharisees, who are contracting immense guilt by those corrupt and sophistical *reasonings*, on the subtilty of which they may highly value themselves and each other.

SECT. LXXXIV.

ality and uncleanness; all acts of violence, and *murders*; And *thefts*, and *insatiable desires*, and *malevolent affections* of inhumanity and cruelty to mankind; the injuries arising from *false witnessings*, and *deceit*; the vile abominations of *lasciviousness* and intemperance; *an evil* envious grudging *eye*, and that odious temper which discovers itself by such a look (compare Prov. xxiii. 6; xxviii. 22; and xxii. 9); the horrid outrages of *blasphemy*, and *pride*; and, in a word, all kind of *folly*[c], wild imaginations, ungoverned passions, and many other moral irregularities. *All these evils*, and many more which I might mention, *come from within, and these are the things which* do indeed *pollute a man*, and render him an object odious to the infinite purity of the Divine nature: *but* the bare undesigned violation of a ceremonial precept cannot do it; and much more evident it is, that *to eat with unwashed hands*, which has no moral impurity in it, and no authority but a vain tradition to forbid it, *does not*, and cannot *defile a man*: and it must have a very bad tendency to teach people to place religion in things so entirely foreign to it.

Mark VII. 22.

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, [false witness,] deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: [MAT. XV.—19.]

23

23 All these evil things come from within, and [these are the things which] defile the man: [but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.] [MAT. XV. 20.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. XV. 18.

MAY we be all *taught of God* to maintain a constant *watch* over our own *hearts*, as remembering that *from thence are the issues of life*, and from thence the sources of *sin and death!* (Prov. iv. 23.) All the *secret motions* and sentiments of them are *open* to the Divine examination and inspection. There then may we begin our cares, to *purify ourselves from all filthiness* both *of the flesh and spirit*, as ever we would *perfect holiness in the fear of God.* (2 Cor. vii. 1.)

Mat. XV. 19.

We see, what secret *abominations our Lord* has here discovered and marked out. It is a matter of much lamentation, that our *corrupted nature* abounds with such poisonous productions: let us earnestly pray, that they may be rooted out by *Divine grace*, lest we ourselves be *rooted out of God's vineyard*, as at once incumbering and deforming it!

May the blessed spirit of God *create in us a clean heart*, and implant

c All kind of folly.] I apprehend that αφροσυνη here stands directly opposed to σωφροσυνη, or *sobriety of thought and discourse*; and therefore does particularly signify the *wild sallies* of the imagination, and extravagant passions and appetites, and consequently must include a great many *immoralities* not touched on in the preceding enumeration.

implant in our souls a temper opposite to all these *enormities!* May candour and purity, integrity and tenderness, piety and generosity, humility and wisdom, prevail in our hearts and shine in our conduct! And, in a word, *whatsoever things are true and honest, just and pure, lovely and of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise,* let us *think on these things,* and practise them! (Phil. iv. 8.)

SECT. LXXXIV. Mark VII. 21, 22.

Let those, who are employed to *guide others,* be especially solicitous to *know* and pursue the *right way* themselves; lest, instead of *saving themselves, and those that hear them,* they both of them at last perish together. We are in danger of it, if, like these *Pharisees,* we inculcate on our *hearers* a zeal for the *circumstantials* and appendages of *religion,* while its *essentials* are neglected; and perhaps some of the greatest *enormities of the mind* are consecrated under an honourable name, and profanely *listed under the banner* of the God of holiness and love. Mat. XV. 14.

SECT. LXXXV.

Jesus withdraws to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and there expels a demon from the daughter of a Canaanitish woman; and afterwards, in his return to Galilee, cures a man who was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech. Mat. XV. 21—29. Mark VII. 24, *to the end.*

MARK VII. 24.

AND from thence [Jesus] arose, and [departed] into the borders [*or* coasts] of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know *it;* but he could not be hid. [MAT. XV. 21.]

MARK VII. 24.

SECT. LXXXV. Mark VII. 24.

AND Jesus arose from thence, and withdrew from the place where these invidious enemies were continually lying in wait for him, *to the borders* [*or*] *coasts of Tyre and Sidon: and* when he was come into those parts, *he entered into a house* as privately as he could, *and would have had no one know* [*it*] that he was there; *but* he had so many eyes upon him wherever he went, that *he could not* long *be concealed* in that retirement.

25—For [behold, a woman of Canaan out of the same coasts,] whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him, and came, [and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.] [MAT. XV. 22.]

Yea, an occurrence quickly happened, that 25 spread the fame of his arrival there through all the neighbourhood; *for behold, a Canaanitish woman* came *out of those coasts,* to whom, though an alien from the common-wealth of Israel, he displayed his power and goodness in a very remarkable manner. Now this was one, *whose young daughter,* for whom she had a most tender affection, *was possessed by an unclean* and malignant *spirit,* which often threw her into violent agonies: and, as the fame of Jesus, and of the miracles that he had wrought, was known in all those parts, the afflicted mother was no sooner

SECT. lxxxv. told of his arrival, but, *having* now an expectation of relief from the great things she had *heard of him*, she *came* immediately to the place where he

Mark VII. 25. was, *and cried unto him* at some distance with the most humble importunity, *saying, Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou son of David*[a]; consider my distressed case, and extend thy compassion to me, though a stranger; for *my* poor unhappy *daughter is grievously tormented by a* cruel *demon*, that delights in the misery of my child; and I well know that thou art able to cure her.

26 *Now* it is here to be observed as somewhat singular, that (as we just now hinted) *the woman was* not a Jew, but *a Greek, a native of Syrophœnicia*[b], or of that tract of Canaan in which they now were: *and* therefore, though *she* thus earnestly *besought him to cast out the demon from her daughter*, and the case seemed so compassionable, our Lord thought it proper not to take

Mat. XV. 23. such immediate notice of it, as he had commonly done in the like instances; *But*, turning from her, as if he were regardless of her case, *he answered her not a word.*

And his disciples came to him on the occasion, *and entreated him, saying, Dismiss her* with the grant of her request: *for* she is so overwhelmed with her affliction, that *she crieth after us* wherever she sees us[c]; and not only gives us trouble, but is like to make thy abode here more public

24 than thou wouldest have it. *But he replying said, I am not sent, but to* seek and recover *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, and am charged with no immediate message to the Gentile nations, to whom you all know this woman belongs.

25 *Then*, perceiving her case was the subject of their discourse, *she came* nearer, *and fell down at his feet* in a most importunate manner, *and worshipped*

26 (The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation;) and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

MAT. XV. 23. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came, and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then came she, [and fell at his feet,] and

[a] *O Lord, thou Son of David.*] Some have argued from this expression, that she was a *proselyte*; but perhaps she might have learned it from some of the Jews (either immediately or by report), and might use it as a *title of respect* without thoroughly understanding its meaning.

[b] *A native of Syrophœnicia.*] This part of Phœnicia was so called, as it had been formerly conquered by the Syrians.

[c] *For she crieth after us* wherever she sees us.] As Mark tells us *Christ was entered into a house*, and that the application of *this woman* to him prevented his being *concealed*, as he desired to have been; it should seem that she, having learned that Jesus was there, watched for the disciples as they went in and out; and, having *cried after them* some time, she at length got admittance into the house; and, with the profoundest respect, accosted him *at first from some distance*, and *then drew near* and threw herself *at his feet*. Compare Mat. xv. 25, and Mark vii. 25.

[d] *True*

and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. [MARK VII—25.]

worshipped him, saying, Lord, I beseech thee to *help me,* though a stranger; for surely none ever needed thy help more. SECT. LXXXV.

MARK VII. 27. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs. [MAT. XV. 26.]

But Jesus said to her (yet farther to exercise and illustrate her faith), *Let* the Jews, *the children* in God's family, *first be satisfied; for it is not proper to take the children's bread, and throw it to the dogs;* and such you know, that you Gentiles are commonly deemed by our nation, on account of those impurities and abominations that prevail among you. Mark VII. 27

28 And she answered and said unto him, [Truth,] Lord; yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs [which fall from their master's table.] [MAT. XV. 27.]

And she replied and said to him, True, Lord, it would not be fit to put both on a level; *yet* even *the dogs under their master's table* are allowed to *eat the children's crumbs which fall from it*[d]: may I not then humbly hope, that, unworthy as I am, I may also receive some fragments of that mercy which is so liberally bestowed on the Jews, and may have been in some instances wantonly abused: 28

MAT. XV. 28. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great *is* thy faith: [for this saying, go thy way, *and*] be it unto thee even as thou wilt: [the devil is gone out of thy daughter.] And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. [MARK VII. 29.]

Then Jesus answering said unto her, O woman great is thy faith; and it was my design to illustrate, rather than to overbear it; now therefore, *for this* lively *saying,* which argues so much humility and piety, *go thy way* with the kindest answer thou couldst wish, [*and*] *be it unto thee even* just *as thou wilt:* thy desire shall be accomplished in all its extent, for *the demon is* already *gone out of thy daughter,* and I assure thee that he shall torment her no more. *And* accordingly *her daughter was cured from that very hour.* Mat. XV. 28.

MARK VII. 30. And, when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

And, returning back to her house, fully persuaded of the accomplishment of what Jesus had told her, *she found the demon was gone out, and her daughter* was *lying on the bed* composed and quiet, which of late she had very seldom been. Mark VII. 30.

MAT. XV. 29. And [again] Jesus departed from thence [from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon,] and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee [through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis] and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. [MARK VII. 31.]

And Jesus after this *departed again from thence* even *from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and came near to the sea of Galilee,* passing *through* several places in his way that lay in *the midst of the coasts of Decapolis,* from whence his fame had formerly brought multitudes to follow him (see Mat. iv. 25, note[l], sect. 36): *and* on a certain day, in his journey, *he went up to* the top of *a mountain, and sat down there,* to rest himself, and to teach the Mat. XV. 29.

[d] *True, Lord, yet the dogs,* &c.] Both Matthew and Mark use the word ναι, which we have rendered in the former *Truth,* and in the latter, *Yes.* It is sometimes a form of *assenting,* and sometimes of *entreating.* Compare Philem. ver. 20, and see *Blackwell's Sacred Classics,* vol. I. p. 143.

[e] *He*

SECT. LXXXV. the people, who in great multitudes resorted to him to attend upon his preaching, and brought their sick to be healed by him.

Mark VII. 32. *And*, among many other diseased persons, *they brought him one who was* very *deaf, and had* so great *an impediment in his speech* that he was almost dumb too: *and*, making known his case to Jesus, *they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him*, as he had done in many other cases, making no doubt that he would upon this be perfectly restored to his hearing and speech.

33 *And, taking him aside from the multitude*, which was very numerous, *he put his fingers into his ears*, where there was a great obstruction, which hindered him from hearing distinctly; *and, spit-*

34 *ting* on his finger, he *touched his tongue*[e]: *And, looking up*, as *to* his Father in *heaven, he groaned*, in token of his earnest desire that these disorders might be removed; *and* then *said unto him*, as with a voice of Divine authority, *Ephphatha; that*

35 *is, Be opened. And immediately* the word had its effect; and *his ears were* accordingly *opened, and the string of his tongue*, which had hindered it from moving freely, *was loosed, and he spoke distinctly* and in an articulate manner, which from

36 his birth he had never done before. *And he charged* the man himself, and *them* that were near, *that they should tell no one* of it; *but, the more he charged them* to conceal it, *the more* they were charmed with his modesty and humility, and consequently so much the more *abundantly*

37 *did they proclaim* [*the cure:*] *And* all *they* who heard of it *were struck with exceeding astonishment, and said, He has done all things well*, and performed the most extraordinary cures in the most amiable and graceful manner; *making*, in this and many other instances, *both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.*

MARK VII. 32. And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech: and they beseech him to put *his* hand upon him.

33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue:

34 And, looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha; that is, Be opened.

35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published *it*.

37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.

IMPROVE-

[e] *He put his fingers into his ears, and, spitting, touched his tongue.*] If any should ask, Why *our Lord* used *these actions* when *a word alone* would have been sufficient; and *such means* (if they may be called *means*) could in themselves do nothing at all to answer the end? I frankly confess *I cannot tell*, nor am I at all concerned to *know*. Yet I am ready to imagine it might be intended to intimate, in a very lively manner, that we are not to pretend to enter into the *reasons* of all his actions; and that, where we are sure that any observance whatever is appointed by him, we are humbly to *submit* to it, though we cannot see why it was preferred to others which our imagination might suggest. Had *Christ's patients*, like Naaman (2 Kings v. 11, 12), been too nice in their *exceptions* on these occasions, I fear they would have *lost their cure*; and the indulgence of a curious or a petulant mind would have been but a poor equivalent for such a loss.

[f] Happy

IMPROVEMENT.

IF there be any thing in the whole history of *our Lord*, which might have a tendency to discourage and terrify the humble penitent, it would surely be *his treatment* of this poor *Canaanitish woman*, when she made so humble and so affectionate an application to him; first *keeping silence;* then intimating in words a *coldness*, not to say *an aversion;* and at last representing her but *as a dog* in comparison of the *Jews*. Surely such an answer had almost broke her heart, had it not been secretly supported by *his grace*, while *his conduct* seemed so *unkind*. Happy are they that, like her (who, though a *Gentile*, did in this instance approve herself a true *daughter of Abraham*), can *against hope believe in hope!* (Rom. iv. 18.) Happy they, who can thus extract *arguments* even *from discouragement*[f]! They will finally conquer and triumph, as this pious *woman* did; and the honours of their *faith* will be commemorated even by *Christ* himself, who soon indulges the overflowing tenderness of his heart in the *applause* he bestows upon her, and the ample *grant* he makes her of all that she asked in its utmost extent.

SECT. lxxxv. Mat. XV. 23. 24 26 28

The story of the *deaf man*, whose *ears were opened* and *his tongue loosed*, is one additional instance, among many more, of *Christ's humility*, as well as of his *power*. He *retired* from the admiring *multitude;* he *used means* when he could easily have wrought without them; he solemnly *addressed* his *heavenly Father*, virtually acknowledging, while he *looked up to heaven*, that, as man, he *derived* his miraculous power *from above;* and he was so far superior to the sentiments of *vanity*, that he *commanded men to conceal* the most glorious and benevolent actions. May all his followers, and especially his ministers, *learn of him* who was thus *meek and lowly!* (Mat. xi. 29.) neither acting as in *their own strength*, when they attempt a *spiritual cure;* nor proclaiming *their own praises*, when they have effected it. Then will they likewise *do all things well;* and there will be *that beauty* in the manner, which no wise man would entirely neglect, even in *those actions*, which are in themselves most excellent and great.

Mark VII. 32. *& seq.* 33 34 36 37

SECT.

[f] Happy are they, &c.] The pious, moderate, and eloquent Bishop Hall has a fine *contemplation* on this subject, to which I refer the reader with pleasure; and take this opportunity of observing that (allowing something for the peculiarities of the age in which he lived) I have met with no *devotional writings* on the *historical* part of *scripture*, which have generally given me so much entertainment as his.

SECT. LXXXVI.

Our Lord, after many amazing miracles, feeds above four thousand with seven loaves and a few small fishes; and then goes over to Dalmanutha. Mat. XV. 30, *to the end.* Mark VIII. 1—10.

MAT. XV. 30.

SECT. LXXXVI. *AND* while Jesus was seated on the mountain to which he went up, (Mat. xv. 29,) *there came to him,* besides the deaf man of whom we Mat. XV. 30. have just been speaking, *great multitudes, having* brought along *with them persons who were lame,* or *blind,* or *dumb,* [*or*] *maimed* by the loss of a limb, *and many others,* who had different complaints; *and they cast them at the feet of Jesus,* entreating his compassion, which failed not to operate on such occasions, *and he healed them* all.

31 And *so* many and various were the displays of his miraculous power in the cures he wrought *that the* whole *multitude was* perfectly *amazed, when they beheld the dumb speaking* forth the praises of God and of their great Deliverer; *the maimed made whole* by the recovery of hands and arms which they had lost, or which were grown quite useless to them;[a] *the lame walking* with vigour and agility, *and the blind seeing* every object distinctly, and immediately bearing, without any inconvenience, the full force of unaccustomed light:[b] *and,* struck with such various and pleasing wonders, *they glorified the God of Israel,* who had raised up so illustrious a Prophet to his people, and sent help to so many afflicted creatures whom no human power could have restored.

Mark VIII. 1. This concourse of people continued with him much

MAT. XV. 30. AND great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them:

31 Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

MARK VIII. 1. In those

a *The maimed made whole.*] The word κυλλὸς, which we render *maimed,* does, in the strictest propriety (as Festus observes,) signify *one whose hand or arm has been cut off* (see Mark ix. 43.) but it is sometimes applied to those who only were *disabled* in those parts. (See *Beza* and *Casaub. in loc.*) And though in some rare instances it may be used to signify *a lameness in the feet* (see *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 77, and *Albert. Observ.* p. 109.) yet, as it is here opposed to χωλοὺς περιπατοῦντας, *the lame walking,* it must undoubtedly be limited as in the *paraphrase.*—It is reasonable to suppose that among the many *maimed,* who were brought on such occasions, there were some whose *limbs had been cut off*; and, I think, hardly any of the *miracles* of *our Lord* were more illustrious and amazing than the recovery of such.

b Bearing—the full force of unaccustomed light.] So far as we can judge by all the stories of the *blind restored to sight,* which occur in the *gospel,* this was universally the case; and I could not forbear pointing out so wonderful a circumstance.

c They

SECT. lxxxvi.

Mark VIII. 1.

the multi- very great, nothing to called his to him, and iem. [MAT.

much longer than could have been imagined; and, the season being favourable, they were so intent on hearing Christ and seeing his miracles, that they lodged two nights together in the fields:[c] and therefore, *in those days, the multitude being very great and having* spent the provision they had brought out with them, so that now on the third day they had *nothing to eat, Jesus having called his disciples to him, says unto them,* 2 *I* cannot but *have compassion on the multitude* of my hearers, who flock thus eagerly about me, and express such zeal in their attendance, as to expose themselves thereby to many inconveniences: *for they have continued with me now three days, and* I well know, that they *have nothing* left *to eat: And* therefore 3 *I will not send them away fasting to their own houses, lest,* if I do, *they should* some of them *faint by the way: for* our Lord knew, that *several of them came from a considerable distance,* and were but ill furnished for procuring accommodations abroad.

compassion ltitude, be- have now me three have no- it: [MAT. -]

'I will not] away fast- own hou- ey faint] by or divers of from afar. —32.]

And his disciples, not reflecting on the miracle 4 he had lately wrought for the relief of the five thousand, or not imagining he would repeat it, *answered him, From whence can any one* hope to *satisfy these men with bread* and other food *here* in this desert country, if he had ever so much money to spare for the purpose? [*And*] especially *whence should we,* whose stock is so small, *have so much bread in the wilderness as* might suffice *to fill so great a multitude,* whose appetites are many of them sharpened by so long a fast? We cannot but wonder to hear thee mention such a design.

iis disciples iim, From n a man sa- men with ? [Whence e have so id in the as to fill nultitude?] .33.]

And he asked them, How many loaves are you 5 provided with, or what *have you* at hand to eat? *And they said,* We have only *seven* loaves among us all, *and a few little fishes,* which is a very trifle to the present purpose. *And,* having or- 6 dered them to bring out what they had, *he commanded the multitude to sit down* in ranks *on the ground*

he asked ow many ye? And Seven, [and tle fishes.] . 34]

: command- ultitude] to sit

lodged two nights together in This we may infer from the The season of the year was t being, as we have observed, r the *pas over.* (See *sect.* lxxxiii. 438.) And besides, that the ber of *cures,* which had been ut just before, might animate them, perhaps they might conclude that the *miraculous power of Christ,* which was displayed in so many glorious instances around them, would either *preserve their health* from being endangered by the large dews which fell in the night, or *restore them* from any disorder they might contract by their eagerness to attend on his ministry.

d That

SECT. LXXXV.

ground, that they might be served as before, in an orderly manner;[d] *and* then *having took the seven loaves, and* solemnly *given thanks* to his heavenly Father, acknowledging his goodness as the great Author of all mercies, when he had blessed them before them all. *he brake* them into proper pieces, *and gave* [*them*] *to his disciples to set before them; and they* accordingly *set them before the people. And, as they* likewise *had a few small fishes*, he took them also in the same manner; *and having blessed* [*them*] as he had done the bread, *he commanded* his disciples *to set them also before the multitude.*]

Mark VIII. 6.

7

8 *So they did all eat, and were* abundantly *satisfied:* and the disciples afterwards collected what was left, *and they took up* no less than *seven baskets full of what remained of the fragments*; which Jesus ordered them to gather up, that he might thus convince them in the strongest manner of the greatness of the miracle, and teach them also, at the same time, to use a prudent frugality in the midst of plenty.

9 *And they who had eaten* of these loaves and fishes *were about four thousand men, besides* a considerable number of *women and children*, who were there in company with them, and all partook of the same entertainment.

Mat. XV. 39. *And*, the repast being over, *he dismissed the multitude: and immediately* after this, *entered into a ship with his disciples he* crossed the sea, and *came into the parts of Dalmanutha* (which, with several neighbouring cities, stood *in the coast of Magdala*, not far from Gadara, on the eastern shore of the sea of Galilee:) and there he had an interview with some Pharisees, which will be related in the next section.

sat down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before *them*: and they did set *them* before the people. [MAT. XV. 35, 36.]

7 And they had a few small fishes; and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them*.

8 So they did [all] eat, and were filled. And they took up of the broken meat that was left, seven baskets [full.] [MAT. XV. 37.]

9 — And they that had eaten were about four thousand men, beside women and children. [MAT. XV. 38.]

MAT. XV. 39. And he sent away the multitude: [and straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples,] and came [into the parts of Dalmanutha,] into the coast of Magdala. [MARK VIII. 9, 10.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. XV. 30, 31. WITH what a circle is our blessed *Lord* surrounded[e]! Let us pause a little, and endeavour to paint him to our imagination *on this mountain*, where the *astonished multitudes* so justly extolled all these

[d] That they might be served as before, in an orderly manner.] See *note* h on Mark vi. 40. p. 415. Probably here they might sit *an hundred* in rank, and *forty* in file, by which means the *four thousand* men would be exactly disposed as the *five thousand* had been.

[e] With what a circle is our blessed *Lord* surrounded!] As this story of *feeding the four thousand* is so very much the same with what we had in *sect.* lxxviii. I refer the reader to the *improvement* of *that section* (p. 417.) for practical *reflections* on the greatest part of *this*; and choose here to indulge a devout *meditation* on the *number* and *variety* of those *cures* which Christ performed, which constitutes the whole of this *improvement*, having been elsewhere but transiently touched upon.

these mingled *wonders* of *power* and of *grace*. Let us reflect on the *dumb speaking*, the *maimed made whole*, the *lame walking*, the *deaf hearing*, and the *blind seeing*, that with them *we may glorify the God of Israel*. SECT. LXXXVI. Mat. XV. 30, 31.

But who can describe the sentiments of these happy creatures, who, without any dangerous or painful operation, found themselves, in a moment, restored beyond all the efforts of nature, and beyond all the prospects of hope! With what pleasure did the *ear*, which had just been opened, listen to the pleasing accents of his instructive tongue! How did the *lame* leap around him for joy! and the *maimed* extend their recovered hands in grateful acknowledgments of his new creating power! While the voice of the *dumb* sang forth his praises in sounds before unknown; and the eye of the *blind* checked the curiosity, which would have prompted it to range over the various and beautiful objects of unveiled nature, to fix its rapturous regards on the gracious countenance of him that had given it the day!

Let us farther reflect with what correspondent pleasure must *our Lord* survey these grateful and astonished creatures, while his benevolent heart took its share in all the *delight*, which he gave! *These trophies of his greatness*, how unlike to *those of the field*, the monuments of desolation and slaughter! *Trophies*, for which the *hero* must have struggled with the *man*, and might sit down and weep over his own success!

Whose heart is so insensible as not to feel an *humane* as well as *devout pleasure* in the history of these and the like *miracles*, though the subjects, on which they were wrought, are long since mouldering in the dust! But let us farther recollect, that our *Divine Leader* has other yet more noble and more permanent *trophies;* those immortal *spirits*, which he has *redeemed*, and *sanctified*, and *saved!* So may our transported souls, *O blessed Jesus*, in the consciousness of *health*, *vigour* and *salvation*, behold thee as *our Deliverer!* So mayest *thou* view us with *satisfaction*, as *the travail of thy soul*, in that *mountain of God*, where we hope to offer thee nobler praises, and for ever to consecrate to thy service *those powers*, which thou hast recovered from *weakness*, *dishonour* and *ruin*.

SECT. LXXXVII.

The Pharisees again demand a sign, and Christ upbraids them with hypocrisy in doing it; and, having crossed the lake again, he cautions his disciples against their leaven, and that of the Sadducees. Mat. XVI. 1—12. Mark VIII. 11.

MAT. XVI. 1.

THE Pharisees also with the Sadducees came,

MAT. XVI. 1.

AND when Jesus was landed on the opposite shore of the sea of Galilee, in the coasts of Magdala, SECT. LXXXVII. Mat. XVI. 1.

SECT. lxxxvii. Magdala, *the Pharisees and Sadducees*, notwithstanding the difference of their principles, and the alienation of their affections from each other, agreed to join in an attempt upon him: and accordingly they *came, and began to examine him* in a very crafty and ensnaring manner; *and, to try him* yet farther, *desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven*[a]; pretending that they could not acquiesce merely in such miracles as he had wrought upon earth, where there was much more room for artifice and deceit, and evil spirits might have some greater influence than in the upper regions. (Compare Mat. xii. 33. sect. lxiii.)

came, [and began to question with him,] and [tempting him] desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.—[MARK VIII. 11.]

Mat. XVI. 1.

2 *But he, answering, said unto them*, It is most apparent, you ask this out of a desire to cavil, rather than to learn the Divine will: for in other cases you take up with degrees of evidence far short of those which you here reject: as for instance, *you* readily *say in an evening*, [*It will be*] *fair weather* to-morrow, *because the sky is* this 3 evening *of a* bright and *fiery red: And in the morning*; [*It will be*] *tempestuous weather*[b] *to-day, for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, you know how to distinguish the face of the heavens*, and to form from thence probable conjectures concerning the weather; *and can you not* [*distinguish*] *the signs of the* present *times*, and see by the various miracles which are daily performed among you, and the other tokens which attend mine appearance, that this is indeed the period, which you profess to desire with so much eagerness, and which you might discern with much less sagacity?

2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be* fair weather, for the sky is red.

3 And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to-day, for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not *discern* the signs of the times?

Mark VIII. 12 *And, sighing deeply*, as being touched *in his* own *spirit* with a most compassionate sense of their

MARK VIII. 12.—And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why

[a] *Desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.*] On the whole, I am ready to think the two things mentioned in *note* a on Mat. xii. 38, p. 330, are to be united; and that, what they here demanded was the very thing which *Josephus* tells us. (*Bell. Jud.* lib. ii. cap. 13. [al 12,] § 4.) Impostors of those times promised they would shew them from God; under the character of σημεια ελευθεριας, *signs of liberty*, or some miraculous appearance *from heaven*, to assure them of deliverance from the Roman yoke. And on these principles they continued their demands in the *apostles'* time, (1 Cor. i. 22.) though so many *signs from heaven* had then been given in the *voice* from thence; in the preternatural *darkness* at *our Lord's* crucifixion; in the descent of *angels* in repeated instances; and in that of the *Holy Spirit*, in a visible form, as well as in the most sensible effects. See *Dr. Lardner's Credib.* book i. chap. 5, § 2, Vol. I. p. 291.

[b] *Tempestuous weather.*] So πυρρια properly signifies. Dr. Lightfoot justly observes that the Jews used to value themselves highly on their skill in *prognosticating the weather*. And Grotius has well observed in his *note* on this place what a variety of *signs* marked out that time for the arrival of the *Messiah*.

c *Be*

this genera- after a sign? [say unto wicked and s generation after a sign, shall no sign unto it, but of the pro- as.] [MAT. -]

their guilt and misery, *he said*, *Why does this* SE
generation seek after a farther *sign? Verily*, as lxx
I said once before on this occasion, (Mat. xii. M
39, sect. lxiii.) *I* now *say* it again *to you*, This VII.
is *an evil and adulterous generation*, which *demands a sign*, *and no* such *sign*, as it requires, *shall be given it*, *unless it be the sign of the prophet Jonah*, who lay three days and nights in the belly of the great fish, and then came out alive; to which a most remarkable resemblance will be quickly manifested in the resurrection of the Messiah on the third day, that will moreover be attended with the appearance of an angel coming down from heaven.

he left them; ring into the n, departed ther side. — VI. 4.]

And, having said this, *he* staid no longer to 13
debate the matter with persons of so perverse and disingenuous a temper, but *left them; and*, *entering again into the ship*, which brought him over the sea, he *departed to the other side* of the lake.

XVI. 5. And lisciples were ie other side, forgotten to id, [neither in the ship 1 more than] [MARK]

And when his disciples were come to the other M:
side of the sea, they were concerned to find that XVI
they had forgotten to take any *bread*; *and*, having used all the fragments, which they carried over with them in the baskets, they *had* now *no more than one loaf with them in the ship.*

ien Jesus them, say- ce heed and f the leaven iarisees and Sadducees, ie leaven of MARK VIII.

And Jesus, willing to improve this circum- 6
stance, considering what had lately passed, *gave them a* solemn *charge*, *saying*, *Be very cautiously on your guard* [c] *against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees*, *and* particularly take heed of *the leaven of Herod* [d]: intending thereby to caution them against those corrupt mixtures, which these sects had introduced to the depraving of religion; which tended, like leaven, to overspread and sour, and puff up the mind, and so to prevent the efficacy of Divine instruction upon it.

hey reasoned themselves, ' *is* because ken no bread. III. 16.]

But the slowness of their understanding 7
shewed itself on this occasion, as it had done on many others; *and they debated* privately *among themselves*, *saying*, [*It is*] surely *because we have taken no bread* with us, that our Lord thus cautions us against the leaven of these men, as if they

ry cautiously on your guard.] ciently expresses the sense of s ὀρᾶτε καὶ προσέχετε, which ed in the *original*, to urge the ith the greater force and em-

[d] *Leaven of Herod.*] Those Sadducees, who were also Herodians, might with peculiar propriety be singled out by *our Lord*, to caution his disciples against them. See *Grotius in loc.* and *note* f on Mark iii. 6, p. 274.

[e] *How*

SECT. lxxxvii. they polluted whatever they touched. [*Which*] *when Jesus perceived*, as he knew all the secret workings of their minds, *he said unto them*,

Mat. XVI. 8. *O ye of little faith, why do you reason* in this manner *with yourselves?* and why is it, that you are under such concern, *because you have*

9 *brought no bread? Do you not yet consider*, after all that you have seen and heard, *nor understand* what has so lately passed before your eyes? [*and*] *have you still your hearts* so *hardened*, and your minds so stupified, as not to draw so easy a consequence from such repeated miracles, as to be free from any anxious concern on this account, because you have but one

Mark VIII. 18. loaf? Are you like so many senseless images? *Having eyes, do you not see* with them? *and, having ears, do you not hear? and*, with those natural powers of memory and reflection, *do ye not remember*, what you were witnesses to but

19 a few days ago? Let me refresh your memories, and ask you, *When I broke the five loaves*, and you with your own hands distributed them *among the five thousand* men till they were all satisfied, *how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him*, We well re-

20 member that we took up *twelve*. *And*, added he, *when* in like manner [*I divided*] *the seven* [*loaves*] *among the four thousand*, and fed them to the full, *how many baskets full of fragments did you* then *take up*[c]? *And they said*, Lord, we know we took up *seven*.

21 *And he* farther *said to them*, Since you remember these facts, *how is it that you do not understand* by them *that I did not speak to you concerning bread*, so as to blame you for having brought no more bread, but meant *that you should be on your guard against the leaven of* those erroneous notions and corrupt principles which are so common among *the Pharisees*, Herodians, *and Sadducees?*

8 *Which* when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves because ye have brought no bread? [MARK VIII. 17.—]

9—Do ye not yet perceive, [neither] understand? [have ye your hearts yet hardened?] [MARK VIII. —17.]

MARK VIII. 18. Having eyes, see ye not? and, having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? [MAT. XVI.—9.—]

19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. [MAT. XVI. —9.]

20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. [MAT. XVI. 10.]

21 And he said unto them, How is it that you do not understand [that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?] [MAT. XVI. 11.]

Then

[c] *How many baskets full of fragments did you take up?*] The learned Dr. Daniel Scott, on Mat. xvi. 10. with his usual accuracy has observed that two different words are used in this and the preceding verse for *baskets*, κοφινους and σπυριδας. The former signifies *larger baskets*; and therefore is translated *anniers* by the French: we have borrowed the word from them, and it seems from its *etymology*, first to have been given them from their being used by *bakers* to carry about large quantities of *bread*. The other seem to have been *smaller baskets* with handles, and such as consequently might easily be carried on the arm. It is observable that *our Lord* did not affect to *rise* in the circumstances of the *two miracles* here mentioned. The latter, though in some particulars inferior to the former, was equally a demonstration of the Divine power of Christ, and therefore equally to the purpose for which it is here mentioned; not to urge that it was, of the two, the more fresh in their memories.

MAT. XVI. 12. Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Then they were sensible of their mistake, and *understood that he did not charge them to beware of the leaven of bread; but* that he intended to warn them *of the evil doctrine* and example *of the Pharisees and Sadducees*, against which so many of his discourses were most justly levelled. SECT. lxxxvii. Mat. XVI. 12

IMPROVEMENT.

So evident is it, that the circumstances of a *scripture story* may be *remembered*, where the design of it is *overlooked* or forgot! It is much to be wished, that those which we have been surveying, may not increase the number of such instances. Mark VIII. 18, 21

In all those cases, wherein the *arm of the Lord* has been *made bare* in our favour, let us seriously reflect on the *Divine power* and *goodness*, and learn from past experience to trust it for the time to come. Never let us fall into the perverse suspicions of the *Israelites, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?* (Psal. lxxviii. 19.) But let us *be strong in faith, giving glory to God*, and cheerfully repose ourselves on his care, who can never want *wisdom* to judge aright of the necessities of his people, or *power* to relieve them, even in the greatest extremities. 19, 20 Mat. XVI. 8.

We see a new instance of the perverseness of these *scribes* and *Pharisees*. They *tempted Christ* by unreasonable demands; and he justly suffered them to go away without the additional demonstration they sought. It is not for us to prescribe to God what *degrees of evidence* he shall give us. Let us impartially pursue and improve what we have; and be very careful that our *sagacity*, and openness to *conviction*, in other matters of much less importance, may not condemn our *stupidity* or *obstinacy*, where the truths of God and the salvation of our souls are concerned. 1 4 2, 3

It is our concern to *beware* of *erroneous principles* in religion, and of every corrupt *leaven* which might be ready to insinuate itself into our minds; especially of that, which, like the *leaven of the Pharisees*, would exalt our confidence in ourselves; or, like *that of the Sadducees*, would impair our persuasion of a future judgment, and our solicitous concern to live as in the views of it. May the *oracles of Divine truth* ever appear to our minds as the *rule*, by which all doctrines are to be tried! and let us, in the spirit of love, *contend earnestly for* that *faith*, which we believe to have been *once delivered to the saints;* that both our sentiments and actions may finally be found blameless, *unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ!* Amen. 6, 12

SECT.

SECT. LXXXVIII.

Christ gradually heals the blind man at Bethsaida; and owns to his disciples, that he is the Messiah, applauding Peter for expressly acknowledging him under that character. Mark VIII. 22—30. Mat. XVI. 13—20. Luke IX. 18—21.

MARK VIII. 22.

SECT. lxxxviii.

AND when our Lord had thus crossed the sea, *he came to Bethsaida; and* his fame being well known there, as soon as he entered the place, *they brought him a blind man and entreated him that he would* be pleased only to *touch him*, as being well assured, that this would be sufficient for the recovery of his sight. *And*, as he chose to work this miracle in private, *he took hold of the blind man's hand, and led him out of the town*[a] in the most tender and condescending manner; *and having spit upon his eyes, and laid his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw any thing. And looking up, he said, I* do indeed discern the forms of things, in an imperfect manner, and *see men walking* before me, but it is so obscurely, *as* that I am hardly able to distinguish them from *trees*, any otherwise than by their motion[b]. *Then he laid his hands again upon his eyes, and caused him to look up* a second time: *and* upon this *he* found his sight *was* perfectly *restored, so that he saw every man* and thing about him *clearly* and distinctly. *And he sent him away* directly *to his own house*, which lay in some neighbouring village; *and said* unto him, *Enter not into the* ungrateful *town* of Bethsaida, to proclaim what has now been done for thee; *neither tell* the circumstances of *it to any* man dwelling *in the town*, for they are unworthy the knowledge of such a miracle; but content thyself with returning thy acknowledgments to God for his favour to thee; for I assure thee, that in what I do, I am animated only by a sincere regard to the glory of him that sent me, and to the relief of afflicted creatures.

Mark VIII. 22

23

24

25

26

MARK VIII. 22.

AND he cometh to Bethsaida, and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put *his* hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees walking.

25 After that he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

And

[a] *And led him out of the town.*] Grotius thinks it was an intimation of his just displeasure against the inhabitants of Bethsaida, for their ingratitude and infidelity, that he would not permit them to be eye-witnesses of this miracle, or even suffer the person who received the cure to go back thither to proclaim it. Compare Mat. xi. 21, sect. lix.

[b] *I see men walking, as trees.*] Probably they might not be far from the *way-side*, and these might be *passengers* who happened then to be going by; for it seems by the story, that *our Lord*, when he took him *out of the town*, permitted none of his company to attend him.

c *Cesarea*

d Jesus went his disciples, towns of Ce- hilippi: and it came to y the way, esus came in- coasts of *it*,] as he was ying, his dis- ere with him, asked his dis- saying unto Whom do men I [the Son of m? [MAT. 3. LUKE IX.

IX. 19. They g, said, [Some *thou art*] John ist; but some ; [and others ,] and others t one of the phets is risen [MAT. XVI. IK VIII. 28.]

t VIII. 29. e saith unto ut whom say I am? And Peter an- and saith un- Thou art the the Son of the God.] [MAT. 5, 16. LUKE

SECT. lxxxviii.

And Jesus, with his disciples, went out from the city of Bethsaida, in the neighbourhood of which this miracle had been performed, and came *into the towns* belonging to a city in the northern part of Canaan, (near mount Lebanon, which had formerly been called Laish, but now bore the name *of Cæsarea Philippi*, having lately been rebuilt by Philip the tetrarch[c]. *And it came to pass by the way*, as they were on their journey, *when Jesus was* just *come into* [*those*] *parts*, he retired a while for devotion; and *when he had been praying with his disciples apart, he inquired of them, saying, Whom do men say that I*, who have so long conversed among them as *the Son of man, am?* What notions do you find that men generally form of me?

Mark VIII. 27.

And they, replying, said, Some [*say that thou art*] *John the Baptist* risen from the dead, with an additional power of working miracles; *but others* [*say*] that thou art *Elijah* the prophet, who art come to prepare the way of the Messiah; *and others* say that thou art *Jeremiah*[d]; *and others*, in a more general way, *that one of the ancient prophets is risen again.*

Luke IX. 19.

And, after they had told him what were the thoughts of others, *he* then *said to them*, for the trial of their faith, *But* tell me truly and plainly your own sentiments; *whom do you* yourselves think and *say that I am? And Simon Peter* immediately *answered*, with his usual zeal and forwardness, *and said to him*, in the name of the rest, Lord, we well know that *thou art the* great expected *Messiah*; and art not only the Son of man, the worthy Heir of that glorious and extensive kingdom promised to him; but art, in a proper and incommunicable sense, *the Son of the* ever *living God*; and we believe in thee as such, and adore thee under that Divine character.

Mark VIII. 29.

And

rea Philippi, &c.] Philip the te- lled the chief city of this tract of area, in honour of Tiberius Cæsar; p's own name was added, to distin- from that other Cæsarea so often ed in the Acts (chap. viii. 40; ix. ; xii. 19; xxi. 8; xxiii. 23, 33, . 4. 1.), which was a fine port on *terranean sea*, and had been rebuilt d the Great, and named in honour of s Cæsar.—Josephus gives Philip so haracter, that some have thought retired into his territories for secu- rity from the insults of his enemies else- where. See *L'Enfant's Introduction*, p. 27.

d *Others* say that thou art *Jeremiah*.] Mr. Cradock has observed, that the Jews seem to have had a *tradition* among them, that Jeremiah the prophet would appear among them, when the Messiah came, to recover the *ark of the covenant*, which they fancied he had hid: 2 Mac. ii. 5. (See *Cradock's Harmony*, Part II. p. 12.) And Dr. Whitby imagines, they might farther encourage themselves in that notion, from Jer. i. 5, 10. (See his *note* on Mat. xvi. 14.)

SECT. lxxxviii.

Mat. XVI. 17.

And Jesus, replying, said unto him, Thou hast confessed a truth, and a truth of the utmost importance; *blessed art thou,* therefore, *O Simon Bar-Jonas,* (or the son of Jonas,) in being brought thus firmly to believe it: *for flesh and blood hath not revealed* [*it*] *to thee,* thou hast not learnt it by human report, or the unassisted sagacity of thine own mind; *but my Father in heaven* has discovered it to thee, and wrought in thy soul this cordial assent in the midst of those various prejudices against it, which present circumstances might suggest. *And,* as thou hast been so ready to make this acknowledgment, *I also* in return *say to thee, Thou art* indeed *Peter,* (see John i. 42, p. 125), thou art, as thy name signifies, a substantial rock; *and,* as thou hast shewn it in this good confession, I assure thee, that *upon this rock I will build my church*[e]; faith in me as the Son of God shall be its great support, and I will use thee as a glorious instrument in raising it: yea, so immoveable and firm shall its foundation be, and so secure the superstructure, that though earth and hell unite their assaults against it, *and* death, in its most dreadful forms, be armed for its destruction, *the gates of hell,* or the unseen world, *shall not* finally *prevail against it* to its ruin[f]; but one generation of

MAT. XVI. 17. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

e *Upon this rock I will build my church.*] I look upon this as one of those *scriptures* the sense of which might be most certainly fixed by the particular *tone of voice* and *gesture* with which it was spoken; and therefore have *paraphrased* it with a *latitude,* which an intelligent reader will easily observe.—If *our Lord* altered his accent, and laid his hand on his breast, it would shew that he spoke, not of the *person,* but of the *confession* of Peter (as most *protestant divines* have understood it), and meant to point out himself as *the great Foundation.* Compare 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11.—But if he turned to the other *apostles,* and pointed to Peter, that would shew, he meant to intimate the *honour* he would do him, in making him an eminent support to his church. This is the sense which Grotius, Le Clerc, Dr. Whitby, Dr. Clarke, and L'Enfant defend, and it seems to suit best with the *connection;* (see *Whitby in loc.*) But to be a *foundation* in this sense, was not *his honour* alone: his *brethren* shared with him in it, (see Eph. ii. 20, and Rev. xxi. 14.) as they did also in the power of *binding* and *loosing.* (See Mat. xviii. 18, and John xx. 23.)—On the whole, how weak the arguments are, which the Papists draw from hence, to support the *supremacy of* Peter in their wild sense of it, is sufficiently shewn by *Bishop Burnet on the Articles,* p. 180. *Calvin, Institut.* lib. iv. cap. 6. *Dr. Barrow on the Creed,* Serm. xxviii. *Dr. Patrick* in his *Sermon on this text,* and a multitude more, whom I need not name.—There seems a reference in this expression to the common custom of building citadels *upon a rock.*

f *The gates of hell shall not prevail against it* to its ruin.] It is most certain that the phrase here used πυλαι αδου, does generally in the *Greek writers* signify, *the entrance into the invisible world;* as *Elsner* (Vol. I. p 77, 78), and *Albert* (*Observ.* p. 111, 112), have abundantly proved. So the *seventy* use it, Isaiah xxxviii. 10, and Job xxxviii. 17. (Compare *Wisd. of Sol.* xvi. 13.) So that it is equivalent to *the gates of death,* Psal. cvii. 18, and elsewhere. The plainest and fullest sense seems to be what I have given in the *paraphrase;* for the vindication of which, see *Dr. More's Theological Works,* p. 110, and *Dr. Whitby's note* on this place. Grotius also supposes it refers to the final *triumph of the saints over the grave* at the general resurrection. This does indeed imply

of Christians shall arise after another, even to the very end of time, to maintain this truth, and to venture their lives and their souls upon it, till at length the whole body of them be redeemed from the power of the grave. In the mean time, I will raise thee, O Peter, and thy brethren, whose faith herein agrees with thine (compare John xx. 23), to distinguished honours in my church; *and I will give unto thee*, in particular, *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, and make thee the instrument of opening it both to the Jews and Gentiles[g]: yea, so fully shalt thou be instructed in my will, *and* in the constitution of my kingdom, that *whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven*; that is, thou shalt have authority to declare what precepts of the Mosaic religion are superseded, and what are continued, and what things are allowed or forbidden to my disciples; and I will myself confirm those decisions, whether general or personal, as made by the influences

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

19

ply a *victory* over the *power* and *policy* of *infernal spirits*; but I cannot apprehend a reference to *this* to be chiefly intended; as it is certain, that the Greek word ἅδης [*hades*] does very seldom signify the *state of the damned*, but generally (as שְׁאוֹל in Hebrew), the *invisible world* in general. See *Mr. Howe's Works*, Vol. II. p 61, 62

g *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, &c.] As *stewards* of great families, especially of the *royal household* bore a *key*, probably *a golden one* (as the *lords of the bed-chamber* do), in token of their *office*, the phrase of *giving a person the key* naturally grew into an expression of *raising him to great power*: (compare Isa. xxii. 22, and Rev. iii. 7.) And this seems more natural and certain than Bishop Burnet's supposition, that Christ refers to the custom of *giving a key* to the *Jewish rabbies* when they were admitted into their office, in token of the *power* given them to *expound the scripture*. See *Grotius* on Luke xi. 52, and *Bishop Burnet's four Discourses*, (p. 241, 242). *Peter's opening the kingdom of heaven*, as being the *first* that preached it, both to the Jews (Acts ii), and to Gentiles (Acts x), may be considered as an illustration of *this promise*: but I apprehend it more fully explained by the *power of binding and loosing* afterwards mentioned.

h *Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven*, &c.] A power to *bind and loose* may signify, in general, *great authority* in a family or state; which sense it plainly has, both in Josephus and Plutarch. (See *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 80). When applied to *judges* in criminal cases, it signifies to *absolve* or *condemn* (see *Raphel. Annot. ex Herod.* page 169); and when used of *teachers*, especially in the Jewish language, it refers to their *explications of the law*; and thus *to bind* is to oblige a person to do or forbear any thing in question, or to declare a thing commanded or forbidden; and *to loose* is to declare the thing to be indifferent, or the person at liberty with respect to it. (See *Lightf. Hor. Heb. in loc.*)—The learned Selden has endeavoured to shew that the clause before us must be interpreted in this sense (see *Seld. de Synod.* lib. ii. cap. 7); and many of the greatest characters for criticism in our own country and abroad have followed him; and among the rest the present celebrated *Bishop of Winchester*, in his glorious controversy on the subject of *Church Authority*. I have included that sense, and taken the words in a yet greater extent, as the learned Puffendorff also does (*De Habitu Relig. Christ*, &c. § 22—25). and I shall, with great pleasure, submit to those *ecclesiastical rulers* who shall prove, as the *apostles* did, their *power* to *explain the laws of Christ* in a decisive way, and their *authority* efficaciously to *absolve* or *condemn* men, according to the sense they give of them.

SECT. LXXXVIII. ences of my unerring spirit communicated to thee and thy brethren, and will determine men's final state in a manner agreeable to them.

Luke IX. 21. *And* upon this *he strictly charged and commanded his disciples that they should tell no man,* at present, *this thing concerning him*, which he had so expressly acknowledged to them, *that he was Jesus the Messiah*, and that he actually professed and owned the title; because he knew it was like to be interpreted in a very unjust and unnatural manner, which might have rendered him and his followers obnoxious to the Romans, who would unreasonably look on such a profession as a claim to regal power, and utterly inconsistent with the rights of Cæsar.

LUKE IX. 21. And he straitly charged [his disciples,] and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing [MARK, of him,] [that he was Jesus the Christ.] [MAT. XVI. 20. MARK VIII. 30.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. XVI. 16, 18. WE here behold the *great Foundation* of our faith and hope, even *Jesus*, the *Rock of ages*, the *same yesterday, to day, and for ever* (Heb. xiii. 8), who is *Christ the Son of the living God. Other foundation can no man lay* (1 Cor. iii. 11). On him may our souls rest, and the fiercest tempests shall rage in vain!

18 Our *Lord* foretold that *the gates of hell should not* be able to *prevail against his church* as thus founded; and behold, even to this day, the accomplishment of the prediction. As *Christians* of one age have sunk into their graves, a new harvest has sprung up in the next; and, in spite of all the artifices of *Satan* to pervert *young minds*, and all the advantages with which he attacks them, *instead of the Fathers* have been *the children*, to be *accounted to the Lord for a generation.* (Psal. xlv. 16, and xxii. 30).

19 Let us thankfully adore the Divine goodness herein; and be very sensible how much we are indebted to that goodness in those *powers* communicated to the *apostles*, on whom, as subordinate *foundations* we are *built* (Eph. ii. 20). As they received so ample a *commission*, and *obtained grace from the Lord to be faithful* to it, let us pay the humblest regard to their teachings; as well knowing, that what they have *bound on earth is bound in heaven*, and what they have inculcated, was solemnly confirmed by a Divine authority.

17 If we have listened with attention to those immortal writings of theirs, by which, *being dead*, they *yet speak*; and have found them the effectual means of *revealing Christ* in our hearts, in all his Divine glories and saving powers; let us remember that we owe it *not to flesh and blood*, or the most excellent *human instruments* alone, but to the influences of *our Father in heaven.*

That

That efficacious grace is freely exercised, and operates in *various methods*; on some, in a more *instantaneous* way; on others, like the power of *Christ* on the *blind man* of whom we have been reading, by more *gradual* advances. Let us be thankful for whatever light we receive, and press on to brighter discoveries; and join with them proportionable degrees of gratitude to *Christ*, and veneration for his gospel. SECT. LXXXVIII. Mark VIII. 23—25.

SECT. LXXXIX.

Christ prophesies of his approaching sufferings, rebukes Peter for being offended at them; and exhorts his disciples to self-denial, and a readiness for martyrdom in his cause. Mat. XVI. 21, *to the end.* Mark VIII. 31, *to the end,* IX. 1. Luke IX. 22—27.

MAT. XVI. 21.

FROM that time forth began Jesus to [teach *and*] shew unto his disciples, how that he, [the Son of man,] must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things, [and be rejected] of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and [after three days] be raised again the third day. [MARK VIII. 31. LUKE IX. 22.]

MAT. XVI. 21.

NOW when *Jesus* had applauded the confession of Peter, (as recorded above,) and thereby expressly declared to all the apostles that he was the Messiah, he *from that time began* more plainly than ever, *to teach, [and] shew to his disciples, that he, the Son of man,* who was indeed the Christ of God, *must* in a few months more *go to Jerusalem; and,* there, instead of being owned under the royal character he bore, and submitted to by princes and people, must *suffer many* most injurious *things, and be* disdainfully *rejected by the elders, and chief priests, and scribes* of their nation, *and be killed* in a most cruel and outrageous manner: but he went on *and* added, to encourage them under this gloomy prospect, That *after* having laid part of *three days* under the power of death, he should *be raised again on the third day.* SECT. LXXXIX. Mat. XVI. 21

MARK VIII. 32. And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, [saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee] [MAT. XVI. 22.]

And, as *he* now *spake that saying plainly* and freely[a], whereas he had before only given distant and obscure hints of it, they were exceedingly surprised and troubled: *and Peter* elevated with what our Lord had before been saying, and unable to reconcile it with what he now heard, *took him* [*by the hand*[b]] *and began,* with a mixture of tenderness and surprise, *to chide* him Mark VIII. 32.

[a] *Plainly* and freely.] So παρρησια evidently signifies, and is often rendered in our version (compare John x. 24, and xi. 14.) and in this sense it is opposed to speaking *in proverbs*; John xvi. 25, 29. Christ had before given *obscure hints* of this, John ii. 19. iii. 14. vi. 51. Mat. x. 38. xii. 40. and elsewhere.

[b] *Took him by the hand.*] So I render the word προσλαβομενος. Compare Rom. xv. 7. Gr. which may help to illustrate the sense of it.

[c] *God*

SECT. lxxxix.

him for this melancholy discourse, *saying*, *God* in his infinite mercy *forbid*[c], that thou, *O Lord*, shouldst ever be thus treated! *This* injury and violence, I persuade myself, *shall not* by any means *be* done *unto thee.*

Mark VIII. 32.

33 *But* [*Jesus*] *when he had turned about, and looked* round him *on his* other *disciples*, whose sentiments he knew to be much the same, *rebuked Peter* with an unusual severity; *and said to him*, *Get thee behind me*, *Satan*[d], for *thou* actest the part of a devil, rather than a friend; and *art a scandal to me*, in thus endeavouring to obstruct the great end of mine appearance in the world; *for* by this it plainly appears, that *thou dost not regard* and relish *the things of God*, *but those of men*[e], and losest thy zeal for the Divine glory, and the salvation of souls, in the mean solicitude for the enjoyments of this temporal life, and the grandeurs of an earthly kingdom, of which thou art vainly dreaming.

33 But when he had turned about, and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter [and said unto *him*,] Get thee behind me, Satan, [thou art an offence unto me;] for thou favourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. [MAT. XVI. 23.]

34 *Then having called the multitude, with his disciples*

34 And [then] when he had called the

c *God* in his infinite mercy *forbid!*] Dr. Fuller supposes that ἵλεώς σοι should be rendered, (*May God have compassion upon thee!* (See *Fuller's Miscel. Sacr.* lib. ii. cap. 2.) Heinsius, Grotius, and Le Clerc, give the same interpretation; which is also asserted at large by the learned Mr. Wasse. (*Biblioth. Liter.* Vol. I. p. 30.) And the accurate Dr. Scott renders it, *Mercy on thee!* which is more literal than any of the rest. I think the *phrase*, as used by the *seventy*, generally signifies, *God forbid*; or, as we render it, *Far be it from thee!* (See 1 Sam. xiv. 45. 2 Sam. xx. 20. 1 Kings xxi. 3. 1 Chron. xi. 19. and compare 1 Mac. ii. 21.) But as the accurate *critics* I have mentioned above suppose there is a particular tenderness in their interpretation, I have endeavoured to preserve it in the *paraphrase*.—Some would render it, *Have compassion on thyself*, but I cannot recollect any place where it has that sense; though 2 Sam. xxiii. 17. and Gen. xliii. 23. *Septuag.* have been especially alledged as instances of it. See *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 81.

d *Get thee behind me, Satan.*] Compare Luke iv. 8. p. 120.—The word *Satan*, which is originally *Hebrew*, and has from thence been taken into several languages, is often used in the *Old Testament* to signify *an adversary*, (see Num. xxii. 32. 2 Sam. xix. 22. 1 Kings v. 4. and xi. 14.) and the expression has appeared so *harsh* to some, as coming from the mouth of Christ to one of his *apostles*, that they have rather chosen to translate it, *O mine adversary.* But as the *evangelists* have *both* made use of the word Σατανᾶ, which must be owned to have a sound as odious in the Greek as it has now with us, we may conclude that it was used by Christ, or his *rebuke to Peter* would have been otherwise expressed by some Greek word that signifies *an adversary*. Nor can the word appear at all too harsh, when we consider that the tendency of Peter's saying, though it was spoken out of a singular affection to his Master, was to obstruct the great design for which he came into the world, and none but Satan could desire to prevent what he was ready to submit to for the salvation of lost sinners.—*Dr. Young* (in his *Sermons*, Vol. II. p. 137,) rendering ἵλεώς σοι, *Favour thyself*, supposes that *our Lord* calls Peter, *Satan*, because he now fell on that advice which Satan uses the most successfully of all his artifices to undo men; that of *self-indulgence*: and so makes this scripture an introduction to his discourse on *self-denial.*

e *Thou dost not regard* and relish *the things of God*, &c.] To *relish*, or *savour*, is plainly included; but I did not think it proper to limit it by such a *version*; for the word φρονεῖς often signifies *to fix a governing regard* on any thing, so as to make it the chief object of our pursuit; which seems the plain sense of it here. Compare Rom. viii. 5. Phil. iii. 19. and Col. iii. 2.

f *If*

the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, [Luke, all] Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross [Luke, daily,] and follow me. [Mat. XVI. 24. Luke IX. 23.]

ciples to him, he said unto them all, You must not only expect to see me suffer, but to share with me in my afflictions and sorrows, if ever you would hope to obtain a part in the glories of my kingdom; *if any one* therefore *is willing to come after me* and to attend me as a faithful servant and disciple, *let him* learn to *deny himself* in the dearest pleasures and interests of this present life, *and* habituate himself *daily* to *take up his cross*: let him submit to whatsoever trial Providence may lay before him, *and* be ready to *follow me*, even to crucifixion itself; for till he is taught a readiness to meet death, even in that dreadful form, for my sake, he has attended my other instructions in vain. (Compare Mat. x. 38, p. 401.)

SECT. lxxxix.

Mark VIII. 34

35 For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall [find *and*] save it. [Mat. XVI. 25. Luke IX. 24.]

And it is well worth your while to submit even to this: *for whosoever will* attempt to *save his life* from persecution, by forsaking me and my gospel, *shall* find he has taken the surest way to *lose it*; as he will another day incur the sentence of the second death, and meet a far more dreadful punishment from God, as an apostate, than he could have borne from men as my servant: *but whosoever shall lose* or expose *his life for my sake and the gospel's, shall find* it with far greater advantage in the future state, [*and*] so shall have reason to acknowledge that he took the truest method to *save it*. (Compare Mat. x. 39, p 401.

35

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, [Luke, *that is*, lose himself, or be cast away?] [Mat. XVI. 26. —Luke IX. 25.]

And therefore on these principles it will be certainly your highest wisdom to forego the greatest advantages, or to bear the utmost extremities, rather than to forsake me: *for* it is a kind of proverb among you, *What would it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and be punished with the loss of his life?*[t] and so may

36

I

[t] *If he should gain the whole world, and be punished with the loss of his life?* και ζημιωθη την ψυχην αυτου.] Though the force of this *maxim*, taken by itself, appears best by rendering ψυχην *soul*, which it does undoubtedly on the whole signify here; yet as the same word had been rendered *life*, ver. 35. and its meaning is sufficiently plain from what follows, I thought it better to retain the *same version* here likewise; which, taken in its connection, has (as *Dr. Tillotson* observes, Vol. III. p. 528, 529.) an additional spirit, which consists in the application of a *proverb* relating to the *worth of life* (compare Job ii. 4.) to the *soul*, which is in the highest sense *the life* of the man, or *the man himself*. (Luke ix. 25.)—Την ψυχην ζημιωθεισθαι does not merely signify *to lose the life*, which might be applied to a man who accidentally met death in the pursuit of gain) as a merchant who should be lost in his voyage;) but it properly imports *undergoing a capital execution*, which is an idea of much greater terror, as well as of much stricter propriety in the present case: and would to God it might seriously be considered in this awful view! See *Raphel. Annot. ex Herod.* p. 171.

SECT. lxxxix. I say, what would all that gain, added to his present security, signify, if he thereby bring a sentence of death on his soul, [*and*] so *lose himself,*

Mark VIII. 37. *or be* finally *cast away? Or what shall a man give as a ransom for his life*[g]? what gains would he not be willing to resign, to quit himself of that foolish bargain by which he had sold it? Yet in this case, what would be accepted as an equivalent for it? "Its redemption is precious, and it ceaseth for ever." (Psal. xlix. 8.)

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? MAT. XVI.—26.]

38 Now assure yourselves that this thought may with the utmost propriety be applied to the case before us: *for whosoever is ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation*, shall find, to his cost, that *of him also will the Son of man be ashamed*, and him will he with scorn disown, and with inexorable justice condemn, *when he comes in his own glory*, (that is, in all the pomp and grandeur in which he was of old represented to the prophets,) *and* shall appear upon his throne invested with *the glory of his Father*[h], as commissioned by him, to be the great executor of his judgment, as well as the dispenser of his grace, attended *with* the bright retinue of *the holy angels*, who shall wait on him as his servants to grace the solemnity of

38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the son of man be ashamed, when he cometh [in his own glory, and] in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels. [LUKE IX. 26.]

Mat. XVI. 27. that awful day. *For* you may certainly depend upon it, that howsoever he be now despised and rejected of men, there is a day appointed, when *the Son of man shall* thus *come in his Father's glory*, and be encircled in the most pompous manner *with his* holy *angels; and then shall he* convene the whole world before him, that he may determine the final happiness or misery of each, and *recompense every man according to his actions.*

MAT. XVI. 27. For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Mat. IX. 1. *And he said* farther *to them, Verily I tell* it *you as a* most certain *truth, that there are some of them who stand here* among us *that* shall live to see

MARK IX. 1. And he said unto them, Verily, [LUKE, I tell you

a

g *As a ransom for his life.*] So the word ανλαλλαγμα properly signifies; and in this connection leads us to reflect how willing a *condemned malefactor* would be to give all he had got by his crimes to *buy his pardon*, and how vain the attempt would in this case be.

h *In his own glory, and the glory of his Father.*] How these are distinguished it is not easy to say. Mr. Bragge explains it of the *lustre of his own glorified body*, surrounded with such a *circle of fire* as that in which (according to him) *God the Father* had appeared particularly on *Mount Sinai.* (*Bragge on the Parables*, Vol. II. p. 181.) I think it sufficient to say that, besides *the glory* which the *human nature of Christ* habitually wears in heaven, some *additional splendour* shall now be given to him by the Father, when he sends him with *his commission* on so august an occasion as the *universal judgment.*

you of a truth,] that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power, [*and* the Son of man coming in his kingdom.] [MAT. XVI. 28. LUKE IX. 27.]

a most awful emblem of this important day: for some that now hear me *shall not taste of death*, that is, they shall not die, *till they have seen the kingdom of God come* to be established far and near, *with* a divinely efficacious *power; [and]* have beheld so eminent an appearance of Providence to promote the triumphs of my gospel, and to avenge the cruel injuries I shall receive from this ungrateful nation, that they may be said even to see *the Son of man coming in his kingdom*[i], and leading on his victorious armies against those who would not admit him to reign over them.

SECT. lxxxix.

Mark IX. 1.

IMPROVEMENT.

ALAS, how prone are our foolish souls to *relish and regard the things of men rather than those of God!* How justly do we deserve the *rebuke of our Lord*, who, while he speaks to *Peter* with such *abhorrence*, after all the *encomiums* he had just been giving him, shews us with what *indignation* we should reject every motion that would lead us to prefer our own ease or temporal interest, to the glory of God and the happiness of man.

Mark VIII. 33

We shall never act so mean a part, if we cordially digest the lessons which *Christ* hath here taught us, and consider of how much greater importance the *salvation of the soul* is, than the *gain of the whole world* when opposed to it. Let us steadily pursue *this maxim* of Divine wisdom, and with cheerfulness sacrifice every other interest to the views of an eternal felicity. 36

Does *Jesus* call us to *deny ourselves* for him? What difficulties should we not be ready to submit to, what pleasures should we not renounce *for him*, who *pleased not himself*, that he might shew his love to us; and *took upon him the form of a servant*, that he might *make us kings and priests unto God!*—Does he require us to *take up our cross and follow him?* What sufferings should we not be 34

[i] *The Son of man coming in his kingdom.*] *Raphelius (Annot. ex Polyb. in loc.)* and *Albert. (Observ.* p. 113, 114) have indeed proved that ἐρχομαι is sometimes used for ἀπερχομαι, and ἐν for εἰς (compare John v. 4.) and therefore they, with some other *critics*, would render this text, *Some here present shall not die, till they see the Son of man going into his kingdom*, that is, *ascending to heaven*, which the apostles did, (see Acts i. 9.) But it increaseth the difficulty to suppose both these uncommon senses of the words in question to occur together; nor will Luke xxiii. 42. be allowed as an exact *parallel*. I choose therefore to adhere to our received *version*, which may include a reference to the *giving of the spirit*, and *propagating the gospel*, but chiefly refers to that providential *appearance of Christ for the destruction of Jerusalem*, so often called *the coming of the Son of man*, (Mat. xxiv. 3, 27, 30, 37.) and *the day in which he shall be revealed*, (Luke xvii. 24, 26, 30.) This sense is the more natural here, especially as *our Lord's* manner of speaking intimates that most of the company should be *dead* before the event referred to; yet his *ascension* happened in a few months after this.

SECT. LXXXIX.

be willing to endure *for him;* and whither should we not consent to *follow him*, who has *borne the cross for us*, and willingly expired on it for our sakes!

A sense of *gratitude* for past favours might bear us triumphantly through all the opposition we might be called to encounter in his cause; how much more then may we be animated by the pleasing *hope*, that we shall another day be *confessed by Christ in* 38 *the presence of his Father and of his holy angels*. Let us represent to ourselves that august *presence*, that awful *day*, whenever a regard to *an adulterous and sinful generation* would lead us to *be* Mark IX. 1 *ashamed of Christ and of his words*. So shall we certainly be brought to *see the kingdom of God in its glory;* and if it opens to us in the visions of the future state, we shall have no reason to be anxiously solicitous, though *death* should remove us from these lower regions, before the *gospel* hath that universal *triumph*, which the word of God encourages his church to expect.

SECT. XC.

Christ goes up to a mountain, where he is transfigured, and discourses with his disciples concerning the expectation the Jews had of Elijah. Mat. XVII. 1—13. Mark IX. 2—13. Luke IX. 28—36.

MARK IX. 2.

SECT. XC.

Mark IX. 2.

AND it came to pass after six days, [*or*] if you include the first and last, *about eight days after these discourses*, which were related in the two last sections, *Jesus took with him* those three disciples whom he honoured with something of a peculiar intimacy (compare Mark v. 37. and Mat. xxvi. 37.) namely, *Peter and James, and his brother John, and brought them up, privately, to an high mountain apart* from the people[a], whither he retired *to pray;* intending, as he often did, to spend the night in that holy exercise[b].

MARK IX. 2.—

AND [LUKE, it came to pass [after six days, [LUKE, *or* about eight days after these sayings,] Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John [his brother,] and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves [LUKE, to pray.] [MAT. XVII. 1. LUKE IX. 28.]

And

a *An high mountain apart* from the people.] *Jerom* tells us (*Epist.* 17, 18) that there was in his days an ancient tradition that this was Mount Tabor, which lay in the tribe of Zebulon. Its standing *apart* (as Mr. *Maundrell* observes that it does, *Travels*, p. 112) is to be sure no argument to prove it; for that expression only signifies that it was a private retirement, which it might have been, had it made part of a ridge of mountains. However, as this happened at the distance of *six days*, there seems to be but little probability in Mr. Fleming's conjecture, that since Christ was just before near Cæsarea Philippi, this must be *the mountain* in that neighbourhood on which one of Jeroboam's calves had been worshipped; over which he thinks it a kind of triumph that the *Shekinah* was thus gloriously manifested, where it had been so long affronted by idolatry. See *Fleming's Christology*, Vol. I. p. 40.

b To spend the night in that holy exercise.] This appears from Luke ix. 37. where we read of their *coming down from the mountain the next day.* See p. 476.

c *The*

sect. xc.

e IX. 29. And rayed, [Mark, transfigured beem, and] the of his countewas altered, [*so* face did shine in;] and his rai*was* white and g, [Mark, shiceeding white *r*,] [*or* as the [Mark, so as r on earth can hem.] [Mat. . Mark IX.—

And as he was praying, it came to pass that *he was* suddenly, in a most glorious manner, *transfigured in their presence; and the form of his countenance was changed*[c], [*so that*] *his face shone* with a brightness *like* that of *the sun; and* his whole body was clothed with such a lustre, as shone through *his raiment*, insomuch that the appearance of it *was* all *white and dazzling*[d], *shining* so *exceedingly*, that it seemed as *white as snow* [*yea*] as resplendent *as the light* itself, to *so* great a degree *as no fuller on earth could whiten it*. Such a glory did God confer on his Son, as an earnest of that, in which he was finally to appear; and he permitted these his servants to see it, that they might not be offended at those scenes of deep abasement, in which they were shortly to attend him. (Compare Mat. xxvi. 37. sect. clxxxii.)

Luke IX. 29.

k IX. 4. And] there appear- them [Luke, n] talking with [Luke, which oses and Elias:] XVII. 3. Luke]

And behold, there appeared to them, at the same time that they saw their Lord in this splendid form, *two men*, that were *talking with Jesus* in a language and accent which the three apostles heard and understood, *who were* known to be *Moses* the great giver, *and Elijah* the zealous restorer of the law. These were the persons whom they saw with Christ, in whose honour their respective ministrations terminated; *who appearing* to their view *in* forms of *glory*, somewhat resembling that which he now wore himself, *spake of his exit*, or departure out of the present life and state, *which he was shortly* after, even at the ensuing passover, *to accomplish at Jerusalem*[e]; suggesting and enlarging on such thoughts as were proper to animate him to so painful and glorious a conflict.

Mark IX. 4

Luke IX. 31

e IX. 31. Who ed in glory, and of his decease he should ac- hat Jerusalem.

but Peter, and hat were with him

But Peter, and they that were with him, even the two other disciples, did not see the beginning 32

form of his countenance was changed.] as so striking a circumstance, that *ius (Vit. Jamb.* p. 22.) relates a f Jamblicus, which seems evidently borrowed from this; as many things Philostratus tells us of Apollonius us seem also to have been borrowed ther histories recorded of Christ by *ngelists.*

hite and dazzling.] The words λευκὸς λίαν may literally be rendered, *exceeding white*; but as this clause stands here ted with parallel passages in the *evangelists*, I chose to render it *g*, that some proper *gradation* might be observed, which would otherwise have been destroyed.

[e] *Spake of his exit, which he was shortly to accomplish at Jerusalem.*] Dr. Hammond and Le Clerc seem greatly mistaken in referring this to *Christ's victory* over the impenitent Jews in the *destruction of Jerusalem* by the Romans; for though the word ἔξοδος does sometimes signify a *military expedition* (see *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 219) yet it is plainly used for *death*, or *departure out of the world*, 2 Pet. i. 15. and Wisd. iii. 2. which suits much better here with the construction, τὸ Ἱερουσαλήμ.

SECT. XC.

ning of this glorious vision, nor hear the whole of this wonderful and edifying discourse; for, wearied with the labours of the preceding day,

Luke IX. 32. they *were* quite *overburdened* and sunk down *with sleep; but being awakened* with the splendour of those rays, which pierced through the darkness of the night that had before favoured their slumbers, *they saw*, to their inexpressible astonishment, *his* unusual *glory, and the two men who were standing with him*, and heard the conclusion of their conference, from whence they

33 collected who they were[f]. *And it came to pass that*, just *as they were departing from him, Peter answered and said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here* in such a circumstance as this: let this glorious appearance and converse be prolonged; for we could delight to spend all the remainder of our days thus; *and* therefore, *if thou pleasest, let us make three tents here*[g], *for Thee one, and for Moses one, and one for Elijah*, that thou with them mayest lodge here in a more convenient manner. This was indeed a wild kind of proposal, ill suiting the state of these glorified persons, or the subject of their late discourse: but it is the less to be wondered at, considering the great surprise in which Peter was, *for he knew not what he said, [or] should say; for* such was the effect it had on him and the two other disciples who were then present, that *they were* vastly *terrified* at the majesty of this unparalleled sight, which broke out upon them at once in so unexpected a manner.

Mark IX. 6

Luke IX. 34 *And as he was speaking thus, behold, there came a bright cloud*, which in a most surprising manner spread itself over the top of the mountain, *and overshadowed them* all: *and* the disciples were seized

him, were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

35—And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter [answered and] said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here; and [if thou wilt] let us make [here] three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: [MAT. XVII. 4. MARK IX. 5.]

MARK IX. 6 For he wist not [LUKE, what he said, *or*] what to say, for they were sore afraid.] [LUKE IX.—33.]

LUKE IX. 34. While he thus spake, [behold,] there came a (bright) cloud, and overshadowed them: and

[f] Heard the conclusion of their conference, &c.] It might not perhaps have been proper they should have heard the *whole* of it: God might intend to reveal some of those things to them by the Spirit, and the knowledge of others might be reserved to the discoveries of the heavenly state.

[g] *Let us make three tents here.*] Mr. Fleming thinks it is as if he had said, "Lord, let *this mountain* be to *Israel* now what Sinai was to our Fathers: hold, as it were, thy court here; and let the people resort hither to learn thy will, and pay their homage to thee, attended by these thy glorified servants." (See *Fleming's Christology*, Vol. I. p. 46.) But this seems too great a refinement, and too deep a scheme. I rather choose to interpret them as words of *rapturous surprise*, intended merely to express the *pleasure* they had in what they saw and heard. The proposal was, as St. Mark observes, very improper; but perhaps few, in such an astonishing circumstance, could have been perfectly masters of themselves.—The *tents* they proposed to build must be only slight *huts* or *bowers*; and there is no reason at all to suppose they meant any sumptuous *tabernacles* like that of Moses in the wilderness; and, that no such idea might accidentally be raised, I chose to use the word *tents*.

There

and they feared, as they entered into the cloud. [MAT. XVII. 5. MARK IX. 7.—]

55 And [behold,] there came a voice out of the cloud, [which said,] This is my beloved Son, [in whom I am well pleased,] hear [ye] him. [MAT. XVII.—5. MARK IX. —7.]

MAT. XVII. 6. And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

MARK IX. 8. And suddenly [LUKE, when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone: *and*] when they had [lift up their eyes, *and*] looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves. [MAT. XVII. 8. LUKE IX. 36.—].

seized with such a kind of religious horror, that *they feared, when they entered into the cloud*, and saw it diffused on every side of them. *And behold*, an ever memorable circumstance then happened; for *there came a* most awful *voice out of the cloud*, as the sacred symbol of God's immediate presence, *which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him* therefore with the humblest submission and obedience, as the object of my dearest complacency, and your surest guide to duty and happiness, in all respects superior to the greatest of your prophets.

SECT. XC.

Luke IX. 35.

And when the disciples heard [*this voice,*] *they fell* prostrate *on their faces* to the ground with the humblest reverence, *and were exceedingly terrified* by this tremendous manifestation of the present Deity. *And Jesus*, knowing their confusion, *came and touched them, and said, Rise up, and be not afraid;* infusing into them, at the same moment, a secret strength and fortitude of mind. (Compare Dan. x. 10, 19.)

Mat. XVII. 6.

And on a sudden, while the heavenly *voice was uttered, Jesus was found alone*, Moses and Elijah disappearing in a moment: [*and*] the disciples, *lifting up their eyes*, upon the kind encouragement that he had given them, [*and*] *looking round about* them for the persons *they* had seen but just before, *saw no man any more, but Jesus only with themselves*, who now again appearing in his usual form, graciously entered into conversation with them in the same condescending manner he was used to do.

Mark IX. 8.

And

h *There came a bright cloud, and overshadowed them,* &c.] I cannot think it probable (though a late eminent *critic* has so explained it) that this only means that *the cloud cast a shadow* which fell upon them, but rather that it *spread over the mountain*; and this not like *a canopy* or *umbrella*, but that it *covered it* in such a manner as a cloud does; yet with this difference, that it was more like *a thick smoke* than a shower; and that whereas the *skirts of clouds* are generally *rarer* than the central parts, this was *darker* towards the edges, *a glory* being *in the midst*: and probably it was *the darker part* with which the *apostles* were enveloped, while *the excellent glory* (as St. Peter calls it, 2 Pet. i. 17) seemed much higher, and the rays of it were much attempered by that part of the *cloud*, *veil* which was between it and them. And thus we know that the *Shekinah* had appeared in former ages; particularly when it took possession of the tabernacle of Moses, Exod. xl. 34, 35, and the temple of Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 10, 11.

i *In whom I am well pleased.*] Though neither Mark nor Luke have given us these words, we may be sure that they were really spoken, as we have the concurrent testimony both of Matthew and of Peter, who has thus quoted them, 2 Pet. i. 17. Some have thought their being omitted by Mark an intimation that Peter did not review that gospel with any great accuracy, supposing it was (as Clemens Alexandrinus reports) put into his hands. Perhaps the command that is added, to *hear him*, may refer to that solemn charge to *hear* the great *prophet*, Deut. xviii. 15.

k *They*

SECT. XC.

And as they came down from the mountain, on which this wonderful transaction had passed, *Jesus* strictly *charged them, that they should tell* Mark IX. 9. *no one what they had seen, unless* it were *when the Son of man was risen from the dead;* lest, till that glorious evidence was given of his Divine mission, this story should appear as an idle dream,

10 or an incredible tale. *And* when he spake of rising from the dead, *they laid hold on that word*[k], *disputing among themselves what this rising from the dead could mean;* for as often, *and* as plainly, as Christ had declared it to them, they could not persuade themselves to understand it in a literal sense. However, in obedience to the charge he gave them, *they were silent* as to what had passed, *and told no one in those days any of the things which they had* now *seen* and heard.

Mat. XVII. 10 *And his disciples* as they could not doubt but he was the Messiah, took that opportunity of informing themselves as to a scruple, which had long lain on their minds, and *asked him, saying, Why then do the scribes,* the teachers of our nation, and professed students of the law, *say, that Elijah must first come* before the Messiah appear? Is this vision, that we have now seen, all the coming of that prophet, which was to be expected?

11 *And Jesus replying said unto them,* It does *indeed* appear from the scripture, that *Elijah shall first come* to make way for the Messiah, *and regulate all things*[l], by preaching repentance and reformation: *and yet,* how little is the influence that his coming will have upon a wicked and ungrateful generation? And *how is it* also *written of the Son of man* himself[m], that illustrious Person

9 And as they came down from the mountain, [Jesus charged them, that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. [MAT. XVII. 9.]

10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean: [And they kept *it* close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.] [LUKE IX.—36.

MAT. XVII. 10. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes, that Elias must first come? [MARK IX. 11.]

11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things, [and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer

k *They laid hold on that word.*] So I think τον λογον εκρατησαν may most literally be rendered; the *verb* often signifying *to lay hold on,* and, in consequence of that, *resolutely to retain;* but never, that I can recollect, *to keep* a secret. Compare Mat. ix. 25. xiv. 3. Mark xii. 12. and Rev. xx. 2.—I think the words προς εαυτους should be joined with συζητουντες, as they are with the same word Mark i. 27. ix. 16. Luke xxii. 23. and Acts ix. 29.

l *Shall first come, and regulate all things.*] It is plain that αποκαταστησει here (as αποκαταστασις, Acts iii. 21.) cannot, as it generally does, signify *restoring* things to their former state, but only, in the general, *reducing them to order.* It is strange *Tertullian (de Resur.* cap. 35.) should infer from hence, that Elijah the prophet is to come before Christ's second appearance. *Grotius* has well confuted that wild notion, in his annotations, *in loc.*

m *And yet how is it written of the Son of man* himself?] The construction of *this verse* in the *original* is as perplexed as almost any in the *New Testament.* The *Prussian Testament,* which is followed by the *late English version,* renders it roundly and elegantly enough: "It is true," said he, "that Elias must first come to restore all things, and that it is foretold of him, as well as of the *Son of man,* that he should have much to suffer, and be rejected with contempt." But this is not strictly agreeable to the *original,* nor can I find the *martyrdom* of John the Baptist

suffer many things, and be set at naught.] [MARK IX. 12.]

Person whom Elijah is to introduce? It is plainly foretold, *that he must suffer many things, and be contemptuously rejected;* which evidently implies, that his forerunner also should be disregarded, and his preaching slighted. And the event, you know, has been answerable to it: do not therefore expect another to appear, *but* observe what *I* now *say to you,* while I assure you *that Elijah is indeed come already, as it is written of him*[n] in various passages of scripture, (see Isa. xl. 3, and Mal. iii. 1.) *and they* who pretended so eagerly to expect him, *did not know* and acknowledge *him, but have treated him* in the most arbitrary and cruel manner, even *just as they pleased,* without any regard to piety, justice, or humanity: and *thus likewise shall the Son of man* quickly *suffer by them,* and with the utmost enmity and malice shall be persecuted by a hardened people, who will shew no more regard to him, than to Elijah his herald.

SECT. XC. Mat. XVII. 11, 12

12 But I say unto you, that Elias is [indeed] come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed, [as it is written of him:] likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. [MARK IX. 13.]

13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

Then the disciples understood that he spake to them concerning John the Baptist, who was foretold under the name of Elijah, as the Messiah was under that of David. (Compare Mal. iv. 5, and Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.) 13

IMPROVEMENT.

How glorious and delightful was this view of our blessed *Redeemer,* which the *apostles* had, when he was *transfigured before them,* clothed, as it were, with the Divine *Shekinah* and *shining* with a lustre *like* that of *the sun!* How pleasing and how edifying must it be to them, to see with him *Moses* and *Elijah,* those two eminent saints, who had so many ages ago quitted our world, but whose names they had often read in the sacred records with wonder and reverence! Ver. 2, 3

Well might *Peter* say, *It is good for us to be here.* Well might he be contented to resign his entertainments and his hopes elsewhere, that they might prolong these delightful moments, feasting their eyes with these Divine visions, and their minds with these more than human discourses. Nor can we wonder that the scene, transitory as it was, left so abiding a savour on his spirits, 4

that

Baptist any where *foretold* in the *Old Testament:* I choose therefore to render this clause as a *question.* That καὶ sometimes signifies [*and yet*] evidently appears from John v. 40. Luke ix. 45. Mat. xxiii. 37. and other places.

n *Elijah is indeed come already, as it is written of him.*] For the reason assigned in the *preceding note* I choose to connect these *two clauses,* and conclude that the words which lie between, both in the *original* and in *our translation,* are to be included in a *parenthesis.*

SECT. XC.

that in an *epistle* which he wrote many years after, and but a little before his death, he should single *this story* from a thousand others to attest it as he does, and to argue from it. (Compare 2 Pet. i. 16—18.) But oh! how much more desirable is it to stand upon *mount Zion*, and to behold those *brighter glories*, which our *Jesus* wears in the heavenly regions! To behold, not merely *Moses* and *Elijah*, but all the *prophets*, the *apostles*, and *martyrs*, and, in a word, all the *saints of God* in every age, whether to us personally known or unknown, surrounding him in a radiant circle; and not only to behold them, but to converse with them. *Lord, it is good for us to be there*, in our desires at least, and in our meditations, till thou pleasest to call us to that happy world, and to take us *thither*, where no *drowsiness* will cloud our eyes, where no *hurry* will discompose our thoughts; but where the perfection of *holiness*, and of *love*, shall cast out every degree of *terror*, as well as of *sorrow*.

Mat. XVII. 4. Luke IX. 32. Mark IX. 6.

In the mean time let us reverently attend to that *Saviour* who appeared in this majestic form, and who comes recommended to us with so many *testimonials* of his Divine authority. He was again declared by a *voice from heaven* to be the *beloved Son of God*: as such let us *hear him*, receiving all his revelations with the *assurance of faith*, and all his commands with the *obedience of love*. If these sentiments govern our hearts and our lives, the thoughts of that *departure* from this world, which we are *shortly to accomplish*, will be no grief or terror to our souls. Like our blessed *Master*, we may connect the views of it, and intermix discourse upon it, with the most delightful enjoyments and converse; nay, it will serve to render them yet more pleasing. For who would not long to be made *conformable to Christ*, even in *his sufferings* and *death*, if it may be a means of *transforming us* into the resemblance of *his glories!*

Mat. XVII. 5. Luke IX. 31.

SECT. XCI.

Christ, descending from the mountain on which he was transfigured, drives out an evil spirit, which had obstinately withstood the attempts of his apostles. Mat. XVII. 14—21. Mark IX. 14—29. Luke IX. 37—43.—

LUKE IX. 37.

SECT. XCI.

THUS did our Lord discourse with his three disciples after he had been transfigured in so glorious a manner in their presence: *and it came to pass, that on the next day, when they came down from the mountain* on which the night had been so delightfully spent, *a great crowd of people*

Luke IX. 37.

Luke IX. 37. AND it came to pass that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him.

SECT. XCI.

MARK IX. 14. And when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

people met him. And, being come to the disciples, and particularly to the rest of the apostles, who, knowing their Master was on the hill, waited for him in the adjacent valley, *he saw a great multitude around them, and*, among the rest, some of *the scribes* and Pharisees, who were *disputing with them*, and endeavoured to take the opportunity of their Master's absence to expose and distress them. Mark IX. 14.

15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed; and running to him, saluted him.

And immediately, as soon as he came near them, *all the multitude seeing him, was struck into astonishment* at those unusual rays of majesty and glory which yet remained on his countenance[a]; *and, running to him*, they *saluted him* with the greatest marks of respect and affection: yet the scribes and Pharisees, without regarding his return, continued their ill-natured attack on his disciples. 15

16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

And, taking notice of the warm dispute they were engaged in, *he asked the scribes*, What is the point you are debating, and *what do you contend with them about?* 16

17 And [LUKE, behold,] [a *certain*-man] of the multitude, [kneeling down to him,] answered and [LUKE, cried out, saying,] Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; [MAT. XVII. 14. LUKE IX. 38.—]

MAT. XVII. 15. Lord, [I beseech thee, look upon my son, for he is mine only child; *and*] have mercy on *him*, for he is lunatic,

And presently, upon his making this inquiry, *behold, a* [*certain*] *man of the multitude* came, and *kneeling down to him, answered* the question in effect: *and, crying out* with a loud and eager voice, *said*, O thou great Teacher and *Master* in our Israel, *I have brought thee my* poor afflicted *son, who has* for a long time been possessed with *a dumb spirit*; and the malicious demon has deprived him of the use of his hearing and speech: And in this moving case, *O Lord, I beseech thee look upon my son, for he is mine only child*, [*and*] yet, instead of being any comfort to me, is a most melancholy spectacle of horror; let me intreat thee therefore to *have compassion on* [*him*,] *for* 17 Mat. XVII. 15

[a] *Was struck into astonishment*, &c.] It is strange that so few critics should have said any thing concerning the reason of the *multitude's* being thus *astonished*. It could not be, as Dr. Clarke supposes, his coming down from the mountain the day after he went up; for they were gathered round it in expectation of his descent; and I do not remember that he ever continued more than *one night* in such a retirement. Nor is it easy to imagine the *multitude* were under any apprehension, after he had been no longer absent, that they never should be able to find him again. I therefore follow Dr. Whitby's natural conjecture in his *paraphrase*, which is agreeable to what we read of Moses, that *the skin of his face shone, when he came down from the mount*. (Compare Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30, and 2 Cor. iii. 7). One would indeed have expected that Luke, who has mentioned the *lustre* on Stephen's countenance, when pleading his cause before the *sanhedrim* (Acts vi. 15), should have taken some notice of the fact here supposed: but it is observable, Mark tells the story before us far more circumstantially than either of the other *evangelists*; which, by the way, is another most convincing proof that his *gospel* was not (as Mr. Whiston supposes) an abridgment of Matthew.

SECT. XCI.

for he is lunatic[b], *and grievously tormented* with terrible fits, which frequently seize him, and sometimes endanger his life; *for he often falleth into the fire, and often into the water. And behold, wherever* [*this*] *spirit seizes him, he* has no strength or thought to take care of himself, but *suddenly cries out* in a violent manner; *and it convulses him* so, *that he foams again* at the mouth, *and gnashes with his teeth* in extremity of anguish; *and* thus he miserably *pines*, and withers *away* in the bloom of his age: *and* [*it*] is *with* great *difficulty* that the malignant demon *departs from him* for a little while, *having bruised him* to such a degree by violent distortions, that he is hardly able to use his limbs in the interval of these dreadful agitations.

Luke IX. 39.

lunatic, and sore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. [LUKE IX.—38.]

LUKE IX. 39. And lo, [wheresoever] *this* spirit taketh him, he suddenly crieth out, and it teareth him, that he foameth again, [and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away;] and bruising him, *it* hardly departeth from him.] [MARK IX. 18.—]

Mat. XVII. 16

And I am persuaded there is some more than ordinary difficulty in the case; for *I brought him to thy disciples, and spake to* [*them*] concerning him, *and entreated* [*them*] in the most affectionate manner, to use their utmost efforts *to cast him out: and they could not* accomplish it, nor *heal him.*

MAT. XVII. 16. And I brought him to thy disciples, [and spake to *them*, [LUKE and besought *them* to cast him out,] and they could not cure him. [MARK IX.—18. LUKE IX. 40.]

17 *Then Jesus said in reply to him, O* ye *incredulous and perverse generation* of men, *how long shall I be with you*, before you will learn a becoming regard to me? *How long shall I endure* that infidelity which *you* are shewing on so many occasions? And thus did he mean at once to reprove the weakness of faith in the father, and in his disciples, as well as the obstinacy and perverseness of the Jewish teachers, who were triumphing in their present disappointment: and then, turning to the father of the child and his attendants, he said, *Bring thy Son hither to me*, and you shall see what my power can effect.

17 Then Jesus answered [him] and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring [LUKE, thy son [hither to me. [MARK IX. 19. LUKE IX. 41.]

Mark IX. 20.

And upon this *they brought him* that was possessed to Jesus, and presented the poor creature *to him. And immediately as soon as he saw him, while he was yet coming, the* evil *spirit* in a rage wrought in him with such violence, that he *threw him down, and convulsed him; and he fell on the ground* with great force, and there lay, *and rolled*

MARK IX. 20. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, [as he was yet a-coming,] straightway the spirit [threw him down, and] tare him, and he fell on the ground,

[b] *He is lunatic.*] Grotius well observes that this word (which exactly answers the *etymology* of the *original*) might with great propriety be used, though there was something preternatural in the case; as the *evil spirit* would undoubtedly take advantage of those disorders, into which the brain and nerves of this unhappy child were thrown by the changes of the *moon.*

[c] *From*

and wallowed, . [Luke IX.

rolled from one side to the other, a spectacle of horror, *foaming* at the mouth, and sweating profusely, till nature was almost exhausted, and he seemed ready to die. SECT. XCI.

nd he asked er, How long go since this to him? And Of a child.

And, that the greatness of the cure might more plainly appear, while the unhappy youth lay thus before him, *he asked his father, How long time is it, that he hath been thus* afflicted? *And* Mark IX. 21.

nd oft-times it t him into the into the waters by him: but if canst do any ave compassi-, and help us.

he said, Even *from his childhood*[c]: *And* the evil spirit is so outrageous, and so malicious, that *it frequently*, as I said, *has thrown him into the fire, and into the waters*, when he has happened to be near them, as if he watched for opportunities *to destroy him*; so that I am sensible it is a most difficult, as well as dreadful case: *but if thou canst do any thing* in it[d], *have compassion on us, and help us*; for surely none ever needed thy pity more. 22

sus said unto thou canst be- ll things *are* to him that h.

And Jesus said unto him, The question is not at all concerning my power, but concerning the strength of thy faith; for *if thou canst* firmly and cheerfully *believe*, the deliverance will surely be effected, as *all things* of this kind [*are*] *possible to him that believeth*[e]. 23

nd straightway er of the child , and said with ord, I believe; u mine unbe-

And immediately the father of the child, touched to the very heart to think that his dear son might possibly lose the cure through the weakness of his own faith, *cried out* aloud, *and said, with tears* in his eyes and ardour in his countenance, *Lord, I* do from my heart *believe* that thy power is unlimited; yet such is my frailty, that when I look on this spectacle of misery, my faith is ready to fail me again: *help* me therefore against *my unbelief*, by mitigating the circumstances of the trial, or communicating suitable strength to my soul[f]. 24

Then

n his childhood.] So the word properly signifies; and, I think otius, it is much more convenient r it thus; than *from his infancy.*

hou canst do any thing in it.] Perserving the *fit* grow more violent pproaching Christ, his faith might fail. This was a very natural of speaking, and yet strongly pand obliquely interesting the honour t in the issue of the affair. See ex. *Xen.* p. 73.

ou canst believe, &c.] As the con in the *original* is something un. Τὸ εἰ δύνασαι πίστευσαι, I can ear mentioning a singular conjecture, which I lately had from the mouth of a very accurate *critic*, especially in *biblical* learning. He thinks, instead of Τὸ, it might be Τί, as some *copies* read it; and then taking πίστευσαι to be the *imperative mood*, would render and paraphrase it with an *interrogation* after Τί; "*What dost thou* "*mean* by saying, *if thou canst?*" referring to τὰ δυνατὰ in the verse before: "*Believe:* "*all things are possible to him that believeth:* "see thou to the firmness of thy faith; "and leave the rest to me."

f *Help my unbelief*, &c.] It seems an inconvenience inseparable from this method of *paraphrasing*, that sometimes (as in the present instance) some lively and strongly

SECT. XCI.

Then Jesus, seeing that the crowd ran together and was continually increasing round them, *rebuked the unclean spirit*, which had possessed the child, *and said unto him*, with an air of superior power and Divine authority, *Thou dumb and deaf spirit*, who had so maliciously deprived this youth of his speech and hearing, *I* strictly *charge* and command *thee* immediately to *come out of him, and* presume to *enter into him no more*, nor farther to disquiet him as long as he lives.

Mark IX. 25.

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the [unclean] spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him; and enter no more into him. [LUKE IX. —42.—MAT. XVII. 18.]

26 *And*, immediately, as soon as he had spoken these words, [*the evil spirit*] *having cried out* with great earnestness, *and thrown him into violent distortions, came out of him; and* the poor youth had been so miserably handled, that *he* fell into a swoon, and *seemed as one dead, so that many* who were present, *said, He is* undoubtedly quite *dead*, and will revive no more.

26 And *the spirit* cried and rent him sore, and came out [of him] and he was as one dead, insomuch that many said, He is dead. [MAT XVII.—18.—]

27 *But Jesus, taking* hold of *him by the hand, lifted him up, and* strengthened him, so that *he arose* and stood on his feet. *And* when [*he*] thus had perfectly restored and *healed the child*, he took *and delivered him to his father*, who received him with an inexpressible mixture of joy and amazement. *And the child was well from that very hour*, and these terrible symptoms returned upon him no more.

27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose: [LUKE, and *he* healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.] [And the child was cured from that very hour.] MAT. XVII.—18. LUKE IX. 42.

Luke IX. 43.

And they who beheld it *were all astonished at the mighty power of God*, by which this illustrious miracle had been wrought.

LUKE IX. 43.—And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.

Mark IX. 28.

And when he had left the multitude, and *was come into the house*, where he then resided, *his disciples*, something mortified at the repulse they had met with in their late attempt, *came to Jesus when* he was *alone, and asked him privately, Why could not we* prevail so far as to cast out this demon, and *expel him*, since we have performed many cures which seemed equally difficult?

MARK IX. 28. And when he was come into the house, his disciples [came to Jesus apart, and] asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? [MAT. XVII. 19.]

Mat. XVII. 20

And Jesus said unto them, It was *because* of the remainder *of your unbelief; for verily I say unto you, If you had* but the least degree of *faith* in a lively exercise, though it comparatively was but *as a grain of mustard-seed*[8], *you might* perform the

MAT. XVII. 20. And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say

strongly pointed sentences should lose something of their spirit by it; yet keeping the *original* thus distinct, may in part remedy it; and, on the whole, many of these expressions are so full of meaning, that the general laws of *interpretation* require, they should be unfolded. To observe the exact medium here, is a felicity, which I dare not say I have obtained, though I have laboured after it.

[8] *Faith as a grain of mustard-seed.*] It is

say unto this mountain, Remove hence unto yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

21 Howbeit, [he said unto them, [this kind can come forth by nothing] but by prayer and fasting, [MARK IX. 29.]

the greatest wonders, so as even to *say to this mountain* here in the neighbourhood, *Remove from this place to that, and it should* accordingly *remove; and*, in a word, *nothing will be impossible to you.* *But* as to the case that was lately before us, *he* farther *said unto them, This* demon which possessed the child was one of a very obstinate *kind*, which *cannot* be expelled so readily as others; nor must you expect to have power over such spirits as these, to oblige them to *go forth by any means, unless* you do *by* frequent *prayer and fasting* intercede with God for his more abundant co-operation; and by such extraordinary devotions endeavour to prepare your souls for his farther influences [h]."

SECT. xci.

Mat. XVII. 20

21

IMPROVEMENT.

THE invidious opposition, which these *scribes* and *Pharisees* made to *our Lord*, and the ill-natured joy they expressed, in what they imagined would disgrace his *disciples*, appears exceeding odious; and it shews us the fatal effects of ambition, pride, and avarice,

Mark IX. 14.

is very trifling to supppose that here is a reference to the *poignancy* of *mustard-seed*, as an emblem of a vigorous and lively *faith*. It is apparently a *proverb* to express any thing inconsiderably small, *that* being, as *our Lord* expresses it, one of *the smallest among seeds*. Thus the rabbies say the globe of the earth is but *as a grain of mustard seed*, when compared with the expanse of the heavens. See *Drusius in loc.*

h *This kind cannot go forth by any means, unless by prayer and fasting.*] An ingenious *physician*, mentioned by the learned *Author* of the *Inquiry into Demoniacks*, &c. p. 47. instead of εν προσευχη και νηστια, would read εν προσαγωγη νηστια, *by constant fasting*; and supposes it refers to the necessity of frequent and long continued *abstinence*, in order to the cure of such an *epileptic distemper* as the child in question had been subject to. But as the criticism is founded on mere conjecture, contrary to all the *copies* known in the world, so I cannot think it at all natural in itself, or pertinent to the occasion; for it seems not at all to *our Lord's* purpose to speak of the *natural methods of cure*, in answer to the *apostle's* demand, why they could not *miraculously* perform it?—Nor can any instance be produced to prove, that the expression is *proverbial* for any thing *very difficult*.—I could therefore see no reason to recede from the usual interpretation, which I have given in the *paraphrase*, —As for the interpretation of Chrysostom and Theophylact, who suppose that γενος signifies at large *this kind of beings*, that is, *demons*, it seems very wrong; since the *apostles* evidently *did cast out* many *demons*, whatever peculiar malignity there might be in this and others of his rank, which might make more intense devotion necessary to eject them.—Sir Norton Knatchbull's sense is extremely forced, who understands it, as if it had been said, *This sort* [of miraculous faith] *advances not but by prayer and fasting*. *Raphelius* has abundantly shewn how inconclusive those authorities from Xenophon are, by which he would justify so odd a version of εξελθειν. (See *Raphel. Annot. ex. Xen.* p. 44—46.) And were the words considered as they stand in Mark, where there is nothing said of *faith*, it would be easy to perceive, *our Lord* is speaking of *a kind of demons*, which they *were not able to cast out:* and that some *demons* are more malignant than others is most manifest from Mat. xii. 45. But oftentimes an *explication* has been built upon the words of *one evangelist*, and many learned remarks have been made to establish it, which could not be applied without great violence to suit the *parallel place* in *another*, and presently has fallen to the ground upon comparing them together.

SECT. XCI.

avarice, when they possess the hearts of those who should be (as these by their office were) *teachers of others*. Such qualities render those in the number of the most dangerous enemies of mankind, who ought to be its most affectionate friends and most useful benefactors. May the light of the gospel break in on their souls, and form them to a better temper!

Mark IX. 14.

Mat. XVII. 14, 15. Luke IX. 38.

The solicitous concern of this *parent* when he saw *his child* under such sad symptoms of *disorder*, may surely remind persons in that relation, of the sentiments, with which they should view those of *their children*, who are, in a spiritual sense, under the power of *Satan*; and of the importunity, with which they should entreat, that the hand of *Christ* may be stretched out for their rescue.

A lively exercise of *faith* is greatly to be desired in this and all other applications of this nature. But alas, how often do we find the remainders of a contrary principle! In how many instances does that passionate exclamation of *the father* in this story suit us? *Lord, we believe, help thou our unbelief!* How difficult is it, in the midst of so much guilt and weakness, of so much perplexity and unworthiness, to *believe* the promises of forgiveness and preservation, of grace and glory? Yet we may humbly hope that He, who by his grace has wrought the Divine principle in our souls, will maintain it there. Only let it be our concern to oppose those corruptions which would enervate and suppress it. Perhaps there are some of them, which will not be driven out, *but by prayer and fasting*, by deep humiliation, and more than ordinary solemnity and intenseness of devotion. But surely they have little regard to the peace and security of their souls, who can allot only a few hasty moments to them, when they have whole hours and days to bestow, not only on the labours, but even on the amusements of life.

Mat. XVII. 21

SECT. XCII.

The disciples are offended at the warning Christ gives them of his approaching sufferings. He makes a miraculous provision for paying the tribute-money. Mat. XVII. 22, *to the end.* Mark IX. 30—33.—Luke IX.—43—45.

MARK IX. 30.

SECT. XCII.

Mark IX. 30.

AND while every one of the spectators *was amazed* at this stupendous miracle wrought on the child who had been so terribly possessed, and *at all the* other extraordinary *things which Jesus did*, our Lord and his apostles left that place, and, setting out on a further progress, *they departed from thence, and passed* from the mountain

MARK IX. 30.

AND [while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did,] they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know *it*. [LUKE IX. —43.—]

tain on which he had been transfigured, *through* the rest of *Galilee: and* Jesus chose to do it as privately as he could; for *he was desirous that no one might know* [*it*,] lest the important conversation, into which he then entered with his disciples, should be interrupted. *For while they continued* travelling and conversing *in Galilee*, and especially when they came to the place where they lodged, *Jesus taught his disciples*[a], more largely than he had done before, what was to befal him. (Compare Mat. xvi. 21. Mark viii. 31. Luke ix. 22. sect. lxxxix.)

SECT. XCII.

Mark IX. 30.

31 — For [while they abode in Galilee, Jesus] taught his disciples, and said unto them, [MAT. XVII. 22.—LUKE IX.—43.]

31

And he *said unto them*, with great solemnity *Apply your ears* attentively *to these sayings*,[b] how disagreeable soever they may be, and let them sink into your hearts; *for the Son of man*, instead of reigning in that grandeur which you expect, *shall* very *shortly be betrayed into the hands of* sinful *men*[c], *and* shall seem for a while to be a helpless prey to their rage; for *they shall put him to death* in a most cruel and infamous manner; *but* they shall not finally triumph over him; for *after he is* thus *slain, he shall rise* from the dead *on the third day*, according to the intimations I have often given you. (See p. 138, 331, 457.)

Luke IX. 44.

LUKE IX. 44. Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men, [and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. [MARK IX.— 31. MAT. XVII. —22, 23.—].

45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying, [and were exceeding sorry.] [MAT. XVII. 23. MARK IX. 32.]

45

But they were so strongly prepossessed with the expectation of a temporal kingdom, that they *understood not this saying*, plain as it was, *and* the sense of *it was hid from them, so that they perceived it not*; foolishly imagining it inconsistent with what the sacred oracles had declared of the glorious success of the Son of man, and the universal empire he was to establish. (Dan. vii. 14.) *And yet they were afraid to ask him* what was the meaning *of that saying*, lest he should upbraid them as unteachable; considering how lately he had given them the like warning before and

[a] *For Jesus taught his disciples,*] Mark assigns this as the reason, why he desired his journey should be private, *viz.* that he might have an opportunity to talk over this subject at large: which shews that the *continuance* or *abode in Galilee*, mentioned by Matthew, refers to the *short stay* they made in the places where they *lodged*; and indeed he could not so conveniently speak to all the *twelve*, while they were actually travelling.

[b] *Apply your ears to these sayings.*] This seems to me a just *translation of* Θεσθε υμεις εις τα ωτα υμων τους λογους τουτους, which is literally, *Put these sayings to your ears*; a phrase, which our language will hardly admit. It intimates the propensity they had to *withdraw* and *turn away their ears* from such declarations, as he was now about to make.

[c] *Shall shortly be betrayed,* &c.] Mark has expressed it in the *present tense*, and says, *The son of man is delivered*; but nothing is more common in the sacred language than to speak of what should *certainly* and *quickly be*, as if it was *already done*. (Compare John xii. 31. xvii. 4, 11, 24. Eph. ii. 5, 6. Heb. xii. 22. and Rev. xviii. 2, 4.—The explication of many other *scriptures* depends on this obvious remark.

[d] *The*

SECT. xcii.

and how severely he had rebuked Peter for endeavouring to dissuade him from it (sect. lxxxix) nevertheless, they perceived that their Master foretold his own death; *and were exceeding sorry*, that a Person of so excellent and amiable a character, from whom they had entertained such glorious expectations, should meet with so unworthy a return.

Luke IX. 45.

Mat. XVII. 24 *And* soon after this, *he came* with his disciples *to Capernaum: and when they were come to Capernaum, the* receivers and *collectors of the* sacred *tribute*[d], which was gathered every year through all their cities, *came to Peter, and said, Does not your Master*, who has the character of so religious a Teacher, *pay the* usual *tribute* of the didrachma[e], or half-shekel, to the service of the temple?

MAT. XVII. 24.—And [he came to Capernaum: and] when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute-*money* came to Peter, and said, Doth not your Master pay tribute? [MARK IX. 33.—]

25 And *he says, Yes*, I know that he uses to pay it, and make no doubt but he will do it now. *And when he came into the house, Jesus*, who was there before, *prevented him*, before he could speak of the affair in question, *and said* to him, *What dost thou think, Simon*, and what seems fit to thee on this occasion? *Of whom do the kings of the earth receive custom or tribute? of their own sons,* 26 *or of strangers? Peter says to him*, Lord it is evident, they receive it only *of strangers. Jesus said to him, Then the sons*, by virtue of their fathers' dispensation, *are free* from the obligation: and, on the like principle, I, as the Son of God, might plead an exemption here, especially as I have not now the sum, which is required towards 27 the maintenance of the temple worship. *Nevertheless, lest we should offend them*, by giving an occasion to imagine, that I put any slight on the temple, or lest others from my example should in far different circumstances omit this contribution, I will not debate the matter, but rather

25 He saith, Yes, And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

26 Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea,

d *The collectors of the* sacred *tribute.*] *Josephus* has expressly asserted that each of the Jews used yearly to pay a *didrachma*, or *half-shekel*, the piece of money here mentioned, to the service of the temple: (see *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xviii. cap. 9, [al. 12] § 1. A custom which probably took its rise from the demand of that sum from each of the Israelites, whenever they were *numbered*; Exod. xxx. 13. And therefore, with Beza, Casaubon, Hammond, Grotius, and many other great critics, I choose to understand this passage as referring to *that*, rather than to any *civil tax*; chiefly because I think, notwithstanding what Salmasius says to the contrary (*against Milton*, p. 259), *our Lord's* argument, ver. 25, 26. can otherwise have no force.—The reader will find an excellent *note* in Grotius here, which renders it unnecessary to enlarge any farther.

e *Does not your Master pay the* usual *tribute*, &c.] It seems then to have been a voluntary thing, which *custom* rather than *law* had established. In Nehemiah's days it was accounted so, and the sum was then something lower. See Neh. x. 32,

sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up: and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

rather work a miracle than fail in the payment. *Go* therefore *to the sea, and* when thou comest to the neighbouring shore, *throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt* there *find* a piece of silver-coin, called *a stater*, which it has just swallowed[f]; *take that, and give* it to *them* that collect the tribute, both *for me and thee;* for thou knowest it will answer their demands for both. Accordingly Peter went, and having caught a fish, he found the money in its mouth, and presently returned and paid it according to his Lord's command.

SECT. XCII.

Mat. XVII. 27

IMPROVEMENT.

How slow and untractable were the minds of the *apostles*, who *understood not* these plain things when thus inculcated again and again! But, on the other hand, how much integrity does it shew in the *historian*, to record what seemed so little to the honour of himself and his brethren! In this respect, and many others, surely credit rises to the *gospel*, even by occasion of the *infirmities* of those to whom it was committed, and *out of weakness they are made strong*.—The lenity of our *blessed Lord* was truly admirable, that he should bear with such *stupidity* in his *disciples* with so much gentleness and patience, and should, with so much earnestness, go on to *renew his instructions* to them. Let us, however, learn to be upon our guard against the prejudices of worldly interest, since, as we see, they may take such strong hold of minds, in the main, upright and pious. And therefore let us earnestly pray, that God would give us a greater relish for spiritual and eternal blessings.

Mark IX. 32

Luke IX. 44

It cannot surely become us to seek the grandeur and riches of this world, when our *blessed Master* was so *poor*, that he could not pay

Mat. XVII. 27

[f] *A stater*, which it had just swallowed.] The *stater* was (as appears in part from this text) a piece of coin, in value about *two half shekels*, or, according to Dr. Prideaux, near *three shillings* of our money, though most *critics* reckon the *shekel* but about *half-a-crown*. (See Drusius on *this verse* and the 24th.)—I see no reason, with Schmidius, to suppose this piece of money was created on this occasion: but supposing, as in the *paraphrase*, that the *fish* had accidentally *swallowed it* (perhaps as it was falling into the water, near some other prey), I cannot forbear remarking how illustrious a degree of knowledge and power *our Lord* discovered in the case before us; *knowledge*, in penetrating into the bowels of this animal, though in the sea; and *power*, in directing this particular fish to Peter's hook, though he himself was at a distance. Hardly any circumstance can be imagined more fit to encourage him and his brethren in a firm dependance on Divine Providence. And it is very natural to reflect how easily Christ could, if he had seen fit, have drawn up immense treasures, by this very method, from the heart of the sea: but he intended that his servants should be enriched and adorned in a much nobler manner than with pearls and costly array.

SECT. XCII. pay this *little tribute* without having recourse to a *miracle*. Yet this he chooses, rather than to *give offence* by a refusal, how justly soever he might have pleaded an *exemption* from it. Let us learn Mat. XVII. 26 from hence that *meekness of wisdom* which will teach us to seek the interest of others rather than our own; and to consider how we may edify others by the abundance of our good works, rather than how we may excuse ourselves in the omission of any. That extent of *knowledge* and *power*, which *our Lord* displayed on this occasion, can never be at a loss for means to repay, whatever we may thus sacrifice for his sake.

SECT. XCIII.

Christ reproves his apostles for their contention, who should be greatest; and recommends to them humility and mortification. Mark IX.—33—37, 42. *to the end.* Mat. XVIII. 1—9. Luke IX. 46—48.

MARK IX. 33.

SECT. XCIII. NOW when Peter was returned from the sea-side, and had paid the tribute-money with which the fish had supplied him[a], our Lord, Mark IX. 33. from a late occurrence which he had observed among his disciples, took occasion to recommend humility to them: *and being in the house* with his apostles, that he might naturally introduce the discourse he intended, *he asked them, About what were you disputing with each other on the way* in so eager a manner, that I could not forbear taking particular notice of it?

34 *But*, instead of answering him directly, *they were* confounded with the question, and continued *silent*, being ashamed to confess the truth; *for* as they were travelling *on the way, a controversy arose among them*, [*and*] *they had* warmly *debated* the matter *one with another, which of them should be* the *greatest* man in that temporal monarchy, which they assured themselves that Jesus, as the expected Messiah, would erect, whatever sufferings might lie in the passage to it.

And Jesus perceiving, notwithstanding their silence,

MARK IX. 33.

AND being in the house, he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

34 But they held their peace: for by the way [there arose a reasoning among them, *and*] they had disputed among themselves, [which of them should be greatest.] [LUKE IX. 46.]

35 And [Jesus perceiving

[a] When Peter was returned, &c.] In order to remind those who may hear these *sections* read in a family, of the connection of them, I have generally introduced each with a brief hint at the subject of the former; which, though it makes the *paraphrase* on the *first verse* of a *section* sometimes much longer than I should otherwise have chosen, yet I hope it may be attended with advantage sufficient to balance that inconvenience.

ceiving the thought of their heart,] sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, if any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. [LUKE IX. 47.]

SECT. XCIII.

silence, *the* secret *thought of their* ambitious *heart*, and observing the same carnality and emulation to be still working there; *when he was sat down*, Mark IX. 35. *called* all *the twelve* about him[b], *and says unto them* with great seriousness and earnestness, It is humility that is the way to honour in my kingdom; and therefore *if any one would be chief* there, *let him*, in all the offices of condescending friendship to his brethren, *be* as *the last of all, and the servant of all.*

MAT. XVIII. 1. At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

Now *at the same time*[c], when *the disciples* were thus called, they *came to Jesus*, and finding that he knew the subject of their late debate, some of them at length took the liberty of *saying*, Lord, decide this question, and tell us plainly, *who is* intended to be *the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*, and to whom wilt thou commit the chief management of affairs in it? Mat. XVIII. 1

2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and [took and] set him [LUKE, by him] in the midst of them, [and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,] [MARK IX. 36. LUKE IX.—47.]

And, when he had answered the inquiry in the manner related above, *Jesus*, in order to impress the important maxim yet deeper on their minds, *having called to him a little child*, that happened then to be in the house where they lodged, *took and set him by him in the midst of them; and taking him* up, and embracing him *in his* gracious *arms*, in token of his tender regard, *he said unto them*, 2

3 Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

I assuredly declare it *to you* as a most solemn and important truth, That *except ye be converted* and turned from these ambitious and carnal views, *and become like little children* in lowliness and meekness, in a candid teachable temper, and an indifference to the great things of the present life (Psal. cxxxi. 1, 2.) you will be so far from having any distinguished rank among my subjects, that *ye shall by no means* so much as *enter* at all *into the kingdom of heaven*, or be entitled to any of its final blessings. *Whoever therefore* 3

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself

shall humble himself even *as this little child*, and act 4

[b] *Called* all *the twelve* about him.] It is natural to suppose, that *twelve* persons travelling together on foot would form themselves into two or three little companies, while some of them, no doubt, would be attending Christ, and discoursing with him: but *our Lord* judged it proper, as he was now *in the house*, that *all the twelve* should hear this admonition, though they might not all have been engaged in the *dispute* which occasioned it.

[c] *At the same time.*] By these words Matthew expressly fixes the *connection* between *this story* and *that* which concluded his xviith *chapter*. But Clarius seems to refine too much, when he supposes that Christ's having thus miraculously provided for paying *Peter's tribute* with *his own*, gave umbrage to the rest: yet this precarious turn serves the *church of Rome* as an argument for the *supremacy of the Pope*; nor is it wonderful that in so weak a cause they should catch at such a *shadow*.

[d] *Entertains*

SECT. XCIII.

act with such candour, simplicity and modesty, as you see in him, *He is* the person, that hereafter will be regarded as *the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*, and will stand high in its final glories. *And whosoever* cordially *shall entertain this child*, [*or*] shall discover an affectionate regard to any *one of such little children, in my name*, and for my sake, as one whom I love, and recommend to his care, *entertaineth me*; for I shall take the kindness as done to myself: *and* I would have you to remember, that it shall not terminate even there, but (as I have formerly told you, Mat. x. 40. p. 402), *whoever* thus *shall entertain* and shew a regard to *me, entertains not me* alone, *but him that sent me*[d], even my heavenly Father, who is honoured or affronted, as I am respected or slighted. And this regard to the meanest of my servants, I must urge upon you, as of the utmost importance; *for* (as I just now told you) *he that* by such a condescension *is* as the *least among you all, He shall be* eminently *great* in my esteem, and be distinguished by peculiar marks of the Divine favour. *But whoever shall* deliberately do any thing to *offend*, and to occasion the fall of *one of these little ones who believe in me*[e], or of any disciple of mine, though he may seem as weak as this infant, will expose himself thereby to such guilt and punishment, that *it were better for him* he should undergo the most certain and terrible destruction one can imagine, even *that a* huge *mill-stone*[f] *should be hanged about his neck, and he should* thus *be thrown* headlong *into the sea*[g], [*and*] there be *drowned in the depth of it.* *No*

Mat. XVIII. 4

5

6

self as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And [LUKE, whosoever shall receive this child,] [*or* one of such] little [children] in my name, receiveth me; [and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me:] [LUKE, for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.] [MARK IX. 37. LUKE IX. 48.]

6 But [whosoever] shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were [cast into the sea, *and*] drowned in the depth of the sea. [MARK IX. 42.]

d *Entertains not me* alone, *but him that sent me.*] Here Christ was interrupted by a speech of John, related Mark ix. 38—41. which is *paraphrased* and explained below, in *sect.* xcvi. where I have accounted in *note* a for placing it apart.

e *Shall offend one of these little ones*, &c.] To *offend* a person generally signifies (as was observed before, p. 211, *note* c) *laying a stumbling block in his way*; so that any, who should by a scandalous life lead others to think ill of the Christian profession in general, or should by persecution discourage the weak, or by sophistry, bad example, or otherwise, pervert them from the way of truth and goodness, would fall under the weight of this terrible sentence.

f *A* huge *mill-stone.*] So I render μυλος ονικος, which (as Erasmus, Grotius, Raphelius, and many others observe) properly signifies *a mill-stone* too large to be turned, as some were, by the hand, and requiring the force of *asses* to move it; as it seems those *animals* were generally used by the Jews on this occasion. See *Raphel. Annot. ex Xen.* p. 46.

g *Thrown* headlong *into the sea.*] *Casaubon* and *Elsner* (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 85), not to mention others, have shewn at large, that *drowning in the sea* was a punishment frequently used among the ancients, and that the persons condemned had sometimes *heavy stones* tied about their necks, or were rolled up in *sheets of lead.* It seems to have grown into a *proverb* for dreadful and inevitable ruin.

h As

7 Wo unto the world because of offences: for it must needs be, that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh,

Wo unto the world, because of such *offences*, or scandals as these; *for* they will bring upon it the most dreadful judgments: indeed, considering the corruption and weakness of mankind, and the various temptations with which they are surrounded, *it is*, humanly speaking, *necessary*, or unavoidable, *that offences come; but* I may well say, *Wo to that man, by whom the offence cometh*, whoever he be, that by avarice, ambition, or any other vicious affection, lays a stumbling-block in men's way, and makes himself accessary to the ruin of immortal souls, tempting them either to renounce or to despise the gospel; for the time will come, when he shall bitterly repent it.

SECT. xciii.

Mat. XVIII. 7

8 Wherefore, if thy hand offend thee, [cut it off,] and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life—maimed, rather than having two hands, [to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:] [MARK IX. 43.]

Wherefore let me renew the exhortation which I formerly gave you, rather to submit to the severest mortifications, than to indulge your sinful inclinations, to the scandal of others, and to your own ruin: And, as I then told you in my sermon on the mount [h] (see note [e] on Mat. v. 30, p. 212), *If thy* right *hand offend thee*, that is, if any thing dear unto thee as a right hand should be the means of leading thee into sin, rather than indulge it, *cut it off, and cast* [*it*] *from thee*, whatever pain or deformity, or other detriment might follow from such a loss; for *it is* much *better for thee to enter maimed into* eternal *life, than having two hands, to go* down *into* the prison of *hell*, even *into that fire which shall never be extinguished: Where their* corroding and upbraiding conscience is as a *worm*, which *dieth not* [i], but, with unutterable anguish,

8

MARK IX. 44. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Mark IX. 44.

h As I told you in my sermon on the mount.] It will, I hope, be observed, that Matthew, who had before so largely recorded *that sermon*, gives us again this passage of it on the present occasion; which is one proof, among many others, that *our Lord* did not think it improper or unnecessary sometimes to *repeat* what he had then said: (See p. 240, *note* e.) And, considering the importance of these maxims, and how little many of his hearers were disposed to receive and retain them, it was a valuable instance of his compassion and wisdom.

i *Where their*—conscience is as a *worm* which *dieth not.*] There may indeed be an *allusion* here to Isa. lxvi. 24. (compare Ecclus. vii. 17, and Judith xvi. 17); but the expression had been just and proper without it; and it is observable, that some of the ancients expressed the same thought by saying, that *the marrow of the back-bone* did, in a wicked man, *turn into a* huge and fierce *serpent*; thereby intimating (by a much finer *figure* than *Ælian*, who reports it, understood) that their own *thought* should be their *torment*, and they should be unable to disarm it by those artifices, which had prevailed in the present life; see *Ælian, Hist. Anim.* lib. i. cap. 51. and *Gataker, Antonin.* lib. viii. § 58.—Since the *first edition* of this work, I have met with an explication of these words in *Dr. Rymer's Representation of Revealed Religion*, p. 155, so new to me, and at the same time so considerable, that I could not forbear mentioning it. He supposes that both *the worm* and *the fire* are meant of *the body*, and refer to the two different ways of *funeral* among the ancients, *interment* and *burning*

SECT. XCIII.

Mark IX. 44.

anguish, still gnaws upon the heart; *and* where *the fire* of Divine wrath, which shall penetrate into the very soul of the sinner, *is not*, and shall not be *quenched* throughout all the endless ages of eternity.

45 *And* again, *if thy foot offend thee, cut it off*, with as much resolution as thou wouldest part with a gangrened member for the preservation of thy life: for something yet more important is here concerned, and *it is better for thee to enter lame into* the regions of eternal *life* and blessedness, though thou wast ever to continue so[k], *than having two feet to be cast into the inextin-*

46 *guishable fire of hell: Where their tormenting worm dieth not, and* where *the fire is not quenched*, nor the violence of its heat abated through all the ages of eternity.

47 *And*, to repeat so wholesome and necessary an admonition a third time, *If thine eye offend thee*, or would necessarily be the means of leading thee into sin, choose rather with thine own hands to *tear it out* of its socket, *and* to *cast it away from thee* as an abhorred thing, than, by complying with the temptation, to hazard thy far more precious soul; for *it is* far *better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God*, [*or*] *into* everlasting *life* and blessedness, *with* but *one eye*, even though the other were not to be restored at the resurrection, but the blemish were to continue for ever, *than having two eyes*, and all the other members of thy body in the greatest perfection, *to be cast into hell*, where they will all be full of unutterable anguish, being tormented with ever-

48 lasting *fire*. In that dreadful prison of Divine vengeance, *where* (as I have told you again and again)

45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: [MAT. XVIII.—8.]

46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, [and cast *it* from thee:] it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God, [*or* into life] with one eye [rather] than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire: [MAT. XVIII. 9.]

48 Where their worm

burning. So that *our Lord* may seem here to prevent an objection against the permanent misery of the wicked in hell, arising from the frail constitution of *the body*: as if he should have said, "The body will not then be as it is at present, but will be incapable of consumption or dissolution. In its natural state, *the worms* may devour the whole, and die for want of nourishment; *the fire* may consume it, and be extinguished for want of fuel. But *there* shall be *perpetual food* for *the worm* that corrodes it, *perpetual fuel* for *the fire* that torments it." The words of the *Apocryphal writer* above mentioned, Judith xvi. 17, greatly illustrate this interpretation; where it is said, *The Lord Almighty will take vengeance on* the wicked *in the day of judgment, putting fire and worms into their flesh, and they shall feel them, and weep for ever.*

k Though thou wast ever to continue so.] It is certain no man will *enter into life, halt, maimed*, or *blind*, as the bodies of the saints will be restored in the greatest perfection. I know indeed that, with some latitude in the expression, he may be said to *enter halt*, or *maimed, into life*, whose spirit passes from a *dismembered body* into the regions of the blessed; but it seems to me that the propriety of the phrase is most exactly preserved by taking it as in the *paraphrase*, and the spirit of the thought is greatly increased by that interpretation.

I *Shall*

worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

again) *their worm dieth not. and the fire is not quenched* nor abated, but preys perpetually on the miserable sinner that is condemned to it. *For* as the flesh burnt on the altar has salt rubbed upon it, in consequence of which it burns so much the more fiercely, so *every one* of those unhappy creatures, the victims of Divine justice, *shall be* (as it were) *salted with fire*[l]; *and*, instead of being consumed by it, shall, in those wretched abodes, continue immortal in the midst of their flames; whereas *every* acceptable *sacrifice shall be seasoned with* another kind of *salt*[m], even that of Divine grace, which purifies the soul and preserves it from corruption.

SECT. xciii.

Mark IX. 49.

50 Salt *is* good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have

In allusion to this, you, my disciples, may remember, I have formerly called you the salt of the earth, (Mat. v. 13, p. 203.) and as *salt is* a very *good* thing, so will you, if you answer that character, be inestimable blessings to the world, by purifying and preserving it from corruption, and diffusing the savour of that knowledge and grace, with which you are seasoned: *but* as I added then, *if the salt* itself *be grown insipid, with what will you season it?* or what can restore you, if you are corrupted, who should be the means of curing or restoring others? See to it therefore, that you *have* this excellent *salt*

50

l *Shall be salted with fire.*] Grotius, Spanheim, Gataker, Le Clerc, and Dr. Mill, have abundantly answered the favourite criticism of Scaliger, by which he would here read πυρια instead of πυρι, that it might be rendered, *Every offering made by fire shall be salted.*—The learned and laborious Wolfius has proposed a multitude of interpretations on this text. He and Mons. L'Enfant think, it refers to the *fiery trial* through which Christians must expect to pass: but this neither seems a natural sense of the *phrase* itself, nor does it so well suit the context, by which it should seem to be a reason why the *infernal fire is never quenched.* I know it may be answered, that it is however a reason why the *disciples* should practise the *mortification* required above: but it seems desirable, where it can be done, to interpret the *particles* in their most usual sense, though sometimes it is necessary (as we have elsewhere observed, page 270, *note* i) to recede from it.—To suppose, as Dr. Clarke and some others do, that here is a reference to the ambiguity of the Hebrew word נמלח, which signifies either *to be salted* or *consumed*, seems very unwarrantable; since αλισθησεται has no such ambiguity; not to say how much it would impair the force of the sentence, leading to an *idea*, the very contrary to what Christ had suggested above no less than *three times.*

m *Every sacrifice shall be seasoned with salt.*] It is well known that the *Mosaic law* required this. See Lev. ii. 13.—Heinsius thinks that as *salt* contracts and binds, it was therefore used as an *emblem of friendship*, which he supposes *our Lord* afterwards to refer to; and that it was the foundation of the *figure*, by which *a perpetual engagement* is called *a covenant of salt*; Numb. xviii. 19. I should rather think it intended as a circumstance of *decency*, that the meat of God's table should be *salted*; and conclude that, if it had any *emblematical* meaning, it was to recommend to the worshipper an *incorrupt heart*, seasoned with savoury sentiments of wisdom and piety. *Sinners* are elsewhere represented as the victims of Divine justice: (Isa. xxxiv. 6. Jer. xii. 3. xlvi. 10. Ezek. xxi. 9, 10. and xxxix. 17.) And *good men* (as in the end of *this verse*) are represented in another view, with regard to their consecration to God, as *acceptable sacrifices.* Rom. xii. 1. xv. 16. Compare 1 Pet. ii. 5.

SECT. XCIII.

salt in yourselves; and, as one instance of it, be careful to *maintain peace with each other,* and do not give way to those very unbecoming disputes and emulations which have been the occasion of my present discourse.

Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

Mark IX. 50.

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. XVIII. 1 How deeply is *pride* rooted in the heart of fallen man; when neither the daily instructions, nor edifying example of the humble *Jesus* could prevent it from appearing, even among the *apostles* themselves, in so mean and unworthy a manner! Still did worldly interest and grandeur so intoxicate their minds, that they seemed even *against hope* to have *hoped* for it, and to have found out a strange kind of method of grafting these expectations, even on the very *cross* of *Christ*, which was intended to destroy them.

Mark IX. 36 How edifying and affecting are these lessons, which the meek and lowly *Redeemer* gave us, with this *little child in his arms*, whose example we are required to copy! Lord, give us of thy *regenerating grace*, that we may do it; that we may *be converted,* Mat. XVIII. 3 *and become as little children*, free from avarice and ambition, malice and prejudice! How melancholy is it to think, that many, who have by their *office* been employed to read and explain this lesson to others, and who have not been *children in understanding*, seem to have learnt so little of it themselves; as if it had never been at all intended for that order of men, to whom indeed it was immediately addressed! If there be any such yet remaining in the *Christian ministry*, let them seriously weigh the *woe* de-
7 nounced on *that man by whom the offence cometh.* May the infinite mercies of God be extended to all professing *Christians*, who give themselves up to worldly pursuits and projects; and especially to those who make the *church* of *Christ* only a kind of *porch* to the *temple* of *mammon*, and the *sacred office* itself merely a convenient vehicle for swallowing down riches and honours! May Divine grace deliver us from such fatal snares, and form us to that *self-denial* and *mortification*, without which we cannot be the true *disciples* of *Christ*; but, after having *pierced* ourselves *through with many* unnecessary *sorrows* here, shall plunge ourselves deep into eternal perdition!

Mark IX 43—48 May these repeated and dreadful representations of *future misery*, which we have now been reading, impress our souls in a becoming manner! Blessed *Jesus!* thou bringest *good tidings*; yet which of the *prophets* under the legal dispensation ever represented *the terrors of the Lord* in so awful a light, as that in which thou hast placed them! Let none of thy *ministers* be afraid to imitate thee herein! nor let any of thy *followers* presume to censure

sure them for it! May we all be effectually *warned to flee from the wrath to come;* and, as we would not another day be *salted with fire,* may our hearts now be *seasoned with thy grace!* and may we, by a modest and *peaceful,* a benevolent and useful life, be daily bearing a testimony to it, and, as *the salt of the earth,* may we be labouring to cure the growing corruption of the world about us! SECT. XCIII. Mark IX. 49, 50

SECT. XCIV.

Our Lord farther enforces condescension and humility, and gives rules for the accommodation of disputes and offences among Christians. Mat. XVIII. 10—20.

MAT. XVIII. 10.

TAKE heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

MAT. XVIII. 10.

FARTHER to promote the humility and moderation of his disciples, our Lord proceeded in the discourse which he began (as in the former section) with the little child in his arms, and said, *Take* special *heed, that you despise not one of these little ones,* or that you do not cast contempt on the weakest and meanest of my servants, nor slight even the soul of a child; *for I say unto you, that their* attendant *angels,* while *in heaven, do incessantly behold the face of my heavenly Father*[a]; and if the highest courtiers in the world above do not disdain, on proper occasions, to minister unto them, much less should you disdain it. Especially when you consider, how much greater an instance of condescension you have continually before you, than it is possible even the angels should give; *for the Son of man* himself[b], that great and illustrious Personage, *came* not, as many have imagined, to reign and triumph upon earth, but SECT. XCIV. Mat. XVIII. 10

11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. 11

[a] *Their* attendant *angels* while *in heaven,* &c.] The *fathers* looked on this as an argument, that each good man has his particular *guardian angel:* (see *Suicer. Thesaur.* Vol. I. p. 43.) And Grotius also seems to allow the force of it. I apprehend this passage rather intimates, that *the angels* who sometimes attend *the little ones* spoken of, at other times stand in God's immediate presence; and consequently that *different angels* are at different times employed in this kind office, if it be incessantly performed. The general sense is plain, that *the highest angels* do not disdain, on proper occasions, to perform services of protection and friendship for the *meanest Christian;* but, as St. Paul says, they are *all ministring spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation:* (Heb. i. 14.) I say, *the highest,* because *to behold the face of God* may signify *waiting near his throne,* and be an *allusion* to the office of *chief ministers* in earthly courts, who daily converse with their princes. See *Grotius;* and compare 2 Sam. xvi. 19. 1 Kings xii. 6. Esth. i. 14. and Luke i. 19.

[b] *For the Son of man* himself.] The particle *for* here introduces another *reason* to enforce the caution *not to despise these little ones,* and not a *proof* of *their angels beholding God's face.* See *note* [d] on Luke xi. 36. p. 336.

[c] *Leave*

SECT. XCIV.

but by all the offices of humility and endearment *to save that which was lost* and undone; and he takes a gracious and constant oversight of the least, as well as the greatest, of his redeemed ones. Compare Luke xix. 10. sect. cxliii.) *What do you think* would be the conduct of a faithful shepherd? *If a man had* a flock of *an hundred sheep, and* but *one of them should wander* from the rest, *would he not leave the ninety-nine* in their pasture or fold *on the mountains*[c], *and go out* with the most solicitous care and labour *to seek that which is gone astray?*

Mat. XVIII. 12.

12 How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

13 *And if he happen to find it, I assuredly say unto you, that* he will bring it back with greater pleasure, and the recovery of *it will give him a more* sensible *joy, than* the safety of *the ninety-nine which had not wandered* at all. (Compare Luke xv. 4, 5, sect. cxxii.)

13 And if so be that he finds it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

14 *Even so* the love and tenderness of God for those, who are regarded by him as his children, is such, that you may be assured *it is not the will of your heavenly Father that* any *one of these little ones should be lost*, for want of your care in attending it, or through your negligence in seeking its recovery.

14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

15 *And*, as in order to the recovery of your weaker brethren, admonition will frequently be necessary, let me lay down a rule, which, when larger societies are formed among you, it will be of great importance to attend to with the utmost care: *If* thou shalt know *thy brother* to be guilty of a fault, and he shall *sin against thee, go and reprove him* in the most convincing, yet the most gentle manner that thou canst[d]; and that he may take it the better, let it be done *between thee and him alone: if he will hear thee* with due regard, it is well, for by this means *thou hast gained thy brother;* he will return to the way of his duty, and the friendship between you will thus be established on firmer foundations than ever, in consequence of this substantial token of thy impartial sincerity and frankness of temper. (Compare

15 Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

c *Leave the ninety-nine on the mountains.*] The *original* will bear either this construction, or that which is given in our common *translation;* but I have rather chosen to express it thus, as most agreeable to what we find in Luke, chap. xv. 4, sect. cxxii.

d *Reprove him* in the most convincing —manner that thou canst.] The word ἔλεγξον signifies to *convince* as well as to *admonish.* Compare John viii. 9, 46; xvi. 8; 1 Cor. xiv. 24; Tit. i. 9; and James ii. 9.—The reader will observe I often choose to give the full force of a word in the *paraphrase*, rather than greatly to increase the number of words in the *version*, though so increased they might express no more than is expressed in a single word or two in the Greek.

e *Tell*

16 But if he will not hear *thee, then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

(Compare Prov. xxviii. 23.) *But if he will not hearken [to thee] take with thee one or two more,* who are persons of character and reputation in the society, *that* their presence may add greater weight to the admonition given, and may be of service, either to silence his objections, and bring him to a sense of his fault, or to prevent disputes, and justify thy conduct, if the matter should be carried farther; as *in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established* more effectually, than it could otherwise have been. (See Deut. xix. 15.) *But if he* shall be still incorrigible in his fault, and *disregard them* in the advice they offer him for peace, then *tell it to the* whole *church*[e], or society of worshipping Christians to which he belongs, and among whom he has immediate communion in gospel ordinances; *and if* they concur in any admonition to the offender, and *he* be so far hardened as to *disregard the* whole *church*, or society of Christians, you have then done your utmost to reclaim him; and while he continues in this obstinate temper, you will do well to enter your protest against it, by forbearing any intimate

SECT. XCIV.

Mat. XVIII. 16.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican.

17

e *Tell it to the* whole *church.*] This is one of those many *scriptures*, which would have been very intelligible, if they had not been learnedly obscured by ingenious men, whose interest it has been to spread a cloud over them. I am more and more convinced that the *vulgar sense* of the *New Testament*, that is, the sense in which an honest man of plain sense would take it on his first reading the *original*, or any good *translation*, is almost every where the true general sense of any passage; though an acquaintance with *language* and *antiquity*, with an attentive meditation on the text and context, may illustrate the spirit and energy of a multitude of places in a manner, which could not otherwise be learned. The old English *editions* of 1539 and 1541 render it, *Tell it to the congregation;* and, I think, properly enough.—The word *church* is unhappily grown into a *term of art*, and has by different persons a variety of *secondary ideas* annexed to it; as *Dr. Watts* has beautifully shewn in his *Essay on Uncharitableness*, p. 7—10. But it signifies in general, *an assembly*, or number of people, *called together* on whatever occasion, as is well known. (Compare Acts xix. 32, 39.) It is in the *New Testament* generally used, as here, for *a particular assembly* (Acts xiv. 23; 1 Cor. iv. 17; xiv. 23; xvi. 19); but sometimes it is used for the *whole body of Christians*, because they are now *called out from the world*, and are at last to be *gathered together* in the presence of Christ their head (2 Thes. ii. 1), and to dwell for ever with each other, and with him. (1 Thes. iv. 17.) Compare Mat. xvi. 18; Eph. i. 22; iii. 10; v. 24; and Col. i. 18, 24.—According to *Bishop Stillingfleet's* interpretation of this text (in his *Irenicum*, book ii. cap. 5, § 8) it should be rendered, *Tell it to an assembly*, or a select company. But it is certain, the force of *the article* is better preserved by our *version;* and as undoubtedly it must be *an assembly of Christians* (compare 1 Cor. vi. 1), so no interpretation seems so natural as, that it should be *that assembly* which was under a peculiar obligation to watch over the person in question (compare 1 Cor. v. 12, 13, and 2 Thes. iii. 14, 15), and *that* whose advices and remonstrances he was peculiarly obliged to hear. And this was likewise conformable to the usage of the Jews, who admonished offenders in their synagogues, and to many of their *maxims*, which *commentators* mention on this text. See *Lightfoot's Hor. Heb. in loc.* and *Selden de Synod.* lib. i. cap. 9.

SECT. xciv.

intimate friendship with such a person; and *let him* therefore in this case *be to thee* even *as a heathen, and a publican*, or other most notorious sinner[f], to whom you would perform only the common offices of humanity, but would avoid his intimate society as scandalous, and to whom you are not under those peculiar obligations, whereby Christian brethren are bound to each other.

Mat. XVIII. 17.

18 These are the maxims which you, my apostles, are to inculcate on my other followers, and let them see to it, that they duly regard you; for *verily I say unto you*, You shall be furnished with such Divine illumination and assistance, as shall abundantly confirm the authority of your decisions on every case and question which may occur; and fully prove (as I formerly told you) that *whatsoever you shall bind* even in this course of your humble ministry, *on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* (See note [h] on Mat. xvi. 19, sect. lxxxviii. p. 463.)

18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

19 And *further*, as a convincing token and demonstration of this, *I say unto you, That* this authority and power not only shall attend the actions of your whole united body, but even *if* any *two of you shall agree together* here *on earth*[g], *concerning any thing which they shall* think it proper to *ask* in prayer for the miraculous confirmation of any of their determinations, *it shall be* immediately *done for them by my Father in* 20 *heaven*[h]. *For where* but *two or three are assembled in my name*, with a regard to my authority, and to the purposes of my glory, whatever the peculiar occasion be, *I am there* by my special, though invisible, presence, *in the midst of them*,

19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

[f] *As a heathen, and a publican*, or other most notorious sinner.] If I am not much mistaken, that celebrated *text* in Titus relating to *heretics* (chap. iii. 10), which requires that a man who disturbs the peace, or subverts the faith of his Christian brethren, should be *twice admonished*, and then discarded by the society, may be much illustrated by this passage. When such a case occurs (as well as when an offended brother has just cause of complaint) each particular person concerned must judge as well as he can, remembering he is answerable to Christ for the impartiality of such judgment.

[g] *If any two of you shall agree together* here *on earth.*] The text so expressl[illegible]rs to *agreeing in a petition*, that I wonder the learned and judicious *editors* of the *Prussian Testament* should render it, *If any two of you shall live on earth in a good understanding with each other.* Perhaps there may be a reference to the notion the Jews had, that it was necessary at least *ten* should concur in *social prayer*, if any extraordinary success was expected. See *Trigland. de Secta Karæ rum*, cap. x. page 172.

[h] *It shall be done for them*, &c.] That this refers to a *miraculous answer of prayer* may appear from comparing Mat. xxi. 21, 22; Mark xi. 23, 24; John xiv. 13, 14; 1 John iii. 22; v. 14, 15; and Jam. v. 16. See *Tillotson's Works*, Vol. III. page 307.

them, and will shew, by all proper interposition of my Divine power, the regard I have to their interest and their prayers. SECT. XCIV. Mat. XVIII. 20.

IMPROVEMENT.

THUS happy are the *meanest servants of Christ*, in the care and favour of their *heavenly Master*, and in the *angelic guard*, which, by his high command, are continually attending even the *lambs of his flock*. So condescending are the *blessed spirits* above, that even the *greatest* of them do not disdain *to minister unto the heirs of salvation;* (Heb. i. 14.) Let not the wisest and greatest men *despise* those, whom *angels* honour with their guardianship and care; especially since *the Son of man*, that merciful *Shepherd*, has come forth into this *wilderness* to *save that which was lost*, and even to *seek* and recover us when we were *gone astray*, and should otherwise have wandered on to our eternal ruin. 10, 11, 12

What could have been more happy for the *church of Christ* than the observation of this plain and easy *rule*, which he has given for ending *disputes* among his followers! And yet who, that sees the conduct of the generality of *Christians*, would imagine they had ever heard of such a rule? Instead of this *private expostulation*, which might often bring a debate to a speedy and amicable conclusion, what *public charges!* what passionate complaints! what frequent and laboured attempts to take, if the least scandalous, yet not the least pernicious kind of *revenge*, by wounding the characters of those, whom we imagine to have injured us! 15, 16

As for *church-censures*, how lamentable is it, that they have been so little conformable to *this rule*, and in many instances so contrary to it, in almost every *Christian nation* under heaven! Is this the form in which *ecclesiastical judgments* do appear in the *Popish*, or even in the *Protestant* world? Are these the maxims by which they have been, or by which they are determined, even by those who claim the largest share in the promises made to the *apostles*, and boast with the greatest confidence of the presence and authority of *Christ* with them, to confirm their sentences, and to sanctify perhaps rapine and murder? Vain wretched confidence! Let us earnestly pray that this dishonour to the *Christian name* may every where be wiped away; and that true religion, and even common humanity, may not with such solemn *mockery* be destroyed *in the name of the Lord.* 17

Let humble submission be always paid to *apostolical decisions* in every difficulty; and let the *promises* made to these leaders in the *Christian Church* be some encouragement even to us, *on whom the ends of the world are come.* None but an Omnipresent, and 18

conse-

SECT. XCIV.

consequently a Divine Person, could say, *Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* 20 His power and his goodness can never be impaired; let it therefore be an encouragement to *social prayer:* and let the remembrance of *our Redeemer's* continued presence and inspection, engage us to behave ourselves agreeably to the relation that we claim to him, and to those expectations from him which we profess.

SECT. XCV.

Our Lord cautions his disciples against a revengeful spirit, and inculcates mutual forgiveness, by the affecting parable of the unmerciful servant. Mat. XVIII. 21. *to the end.*

MAT. XVIII. 21.

SECT. XCV. Mat. XVIII. 21. THEN, when Jesus had given this advice for the accommodation of differences among his disciples, *Peter*, imagining it might be abused by ill-disposed persons, as an encouragement to offer injuries to others, *came to him and said, Lord, how often must I forgive my brother, if he offend against me?* must I go on to do it *until* he has repeated the injury *seven times?*

22 And *Jesus*, in reply, *says to him, I do not* merely *say to thee. Till seven times, but* even *till seventy times seven:* in short, the precept is unbounded, and you must never be weary of forgiving your brethren, since you are so much more indebted to the Divine mercy, than they can be to your's.

23 *For this reason*, or with respect to this matter, I may properly say, that *the kingdom of heaven*, in its constitution and final process, *may be likened to*, or be illustrated by, the instance of *a certain king* that ruled over a large country[a], *who*, as he had a great number of officers under him, was *determined* at length *to settle an account with his servants.* 24 *And when he began to reckon* with them, *there was brought to him one, who* had so abused the eminent station in which he had been placed, and the high confidence which his prince had reposed in him, that he *owed him* a most immense sum, and stood accountable for 25 *ten thousand talents*[b]: *And as he had nothing to*

MAT. XVIII. 21.

THEN came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto to thee, Until seven times; but, until seventy times seven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents:

25 But forasmuch as

[a] *May be likened to*, or be illustrated, &c.] See sect. lviii. *note* [i].

[b] *Owed him ten thousand talents.*] According to Dr. Prideaux's computation, if these

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Mat. XVIII.

1 not to pay, commanded be sold, and and children, that he had, ment to be

to pay, which could be any equivalent for the debt, or any considerable composition for it, *his lord*, according to frequent custom in such cases (Exod. xxii. 3. Lev. xxv. 47. and 2 Kings iv. 1.) *commanded him to be sold* for a slave, *and* also *his wife and children, and all* the goods *that he had, and payment to be made* with the price of them, as far as it would go. *The servant there-* 25 26

servant there- own and wor- him, saying, ve patience , and I will all.

fore falling down in helpless consternation, *prostrated himself at his* master's *feet, and said, Lord*, I beseech thee to *have patience with me* for a while longer, *and I will* endeavour to *pay thee all. Then the lord of that* unhappy *servant*, 27

en the Lord servant was ith compas- loosed him, ve him the

whose affairs were so utterly desperate, *being melted with compassion*, graciously *discharged him; and*, knowing how vain it was to expect he should ever pay him, declared that, on condition of his future good behaviour[c], he frankly *forgave him* all *the debt.*

the same ser- it out, and e of his fel- nts, which . an hundred and he laid n him, and by the throat, Pay me that st.

But just *as that servant went out* from the pre- 28 sence of his generous and indulgent sovereign, *he met* with *one of his fellow-servants, who owed him* but a very inconsiderable sum of money, no more than *an hundred pence*[d]; *and laying hold of him by the throat*, and almost strangling him[e], *he said*, in a furious and outrageous manner, *Pay me that which thou owest* me immediately, or I will detain thee as my prisoner, *And his* poor 29

l his fellow- ell down at and besought ying, Have with me, and thee all.

fellow-servant fell down at his feet, as he had done at his lord's, *and entreated him, saying*, in the very words which he himself had used but just before on the like occasion, *Have patience with me* for a while longer, *and I will* endeavour to *pay thee all. And he would not* be pre- 30

d he would not,

vailed

e *talents of gold*, this would amount *-two millions sterling*; which is so a sum, that it seems strange Anie Great should be able to pay it, *ius* tells us he did, to purchase a ta the Romans: (*Eutrop.* lib. iv. But, by Livy's account of the conpeace, they were *talents of silver*, Antiochus was to pay *fifteen talents*, that is, *five hundred talents to thousand five hundred* when the ould ratify the peace, and the re- *twelve thousand* in twelve years, at nd talents a year: (*Liv. Histor.* ii. cap. 45, & lib. xxxviii. cap. nd even thus the sum must have d to 6,750,000*l.* See *Prid. Con.* I. *Pref.* p. 20, and Vol. II. p. 138.—*Our Lord* seems to have mentioned so large a sum on purpose to intimate the *number* and *weight* of our offences against God, and our utter incapacity of making him any satisfaction.

c On condition of his future good behaviour.] This is a circumstance exceeding natural, and by the revocation of the *pardon* afterwards it seems strongly implied.

d *An hundred pence.*] Reckoning the *Roman denarius* at *seven pence halfpenny* of our money, it amounted to *three pounds and half-a-crown.*

e *By the throat*, and almost strangling him.] This is the proper import of the word πνιγε, which yet more strongly expresses his cruelty.

f *Gave*

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Mat. XVIII.

vailed upon to forbear him any longer; *but went* away with him before a magistrate, *and cast him into prison*, protesting he should lie there *till he should pay* even the last farthing of *the debt.*

not, but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 *And when his* other *fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceedingly grieved* at such an instance of unexampled cruelty from a man in his circumstances, *and came and gave their lord* the king *an exact* and faithful *account of the whole matter*[f], who was highly incensed at

31 So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 so inhuman an action. *Then his lord, having called him* again, *said unto him* with just indignation, *Thou wicked* and barbarous *slave*[g], thou knowest that I frankly *forgave thee all that* vast *debt* which thou owedst to me, *because thou didst*

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 *entreat my pity:* And *shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant*, when in thy power, *even as I* but just before *had compassion on thee?* Thou art most inexcusable in what thou hast done, and I am determined to treat thee accordingly.

33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?

34 *And his lord, being* justly *incensed*, revoked the grant of remission he had just before made, as forfeited by so vile a behaviour; and not only put him in prison, but *delivered him to the tormentors* there, to fetter and scourge him[h], *till he should pay all that was due to him;* which was equivalent to condemning him to perpetual confinement and painful imprisonment during life.

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35 And Jesus concluded the discourse with saying, *Thus also will my heavenly Father deal with you; if you do not every one* of you *from your* very *hearts forgive his brother his trespasses;* and I leave it to your own consciences to judge, whether it be safe for you to tempt the strictness of his inexorable justice, by the severity of your conduct towards your offending brethren.

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

IMPROVE-

[f] *Gave their lord an exact* and faithful *account.*] This is the meaning of the word ἀπεσαφησαν, as *Albert* has shewn; *Observ.* p. 116.

[g] *Thou wicked slave.*] The word δουλε is not always a term of reproach, nor does it necessarily imply more than *servant:* (compare Mat. xxv. 21, 23.) Yet in this connection I thought it would well bear the *version* I have given it, which may best express the *indignation* with which *his lord* is supposed to speak.

[h] *Delivered him to the tormentors,* &c.] *Imprisonment* is a much greater punishment in the *eastern* parts of the world than here: *state criminals* especially, when condemned to it, are not only forced to submit to a very mean and scanty allowance, but are frequently loaded with *clogs* or *yokes* of heavy wood, in which they cannot either lie or sit at ease; and, by frequent *scourgings*, and sometimes by *racking*, are quickly brought to an untimely end. (See *Samedo's China*, p. 225.) To this there is probably a reference here. Compare *sect.* XXXII. *note* b.

IMPROVEMENT.

ıreasonable and how odious does a severe and uncha- SECT. XCV.
nper appear, when we view it in the light of this
Yet what light can be more just than this? We are Mat.
God more than *ten thousand talents;* from our infancy XVIII.
:o contract the debt, and are daily increasing it in our 24
ears: justly, therefore, might he *cast us* into the *prison*
we *paid the uttermost farthing*. And were we to *fall at* 26
vith a promise of *paying him all* on his *patient* forbear-
ust be the language of gross ignorance, or of presump-
', when addressed to a Being who knows our poverty,
; that, in consequence of it, we are utterly incapable of
m any amends. But he magnifies his grace in the kind
free *forgiveness;* and shall we who receive it, and hold
nd all our hope by it, *take our brethren by the throat,*
ıey *owe us a few pence?* or shall we carry along with us 28
inued resentment, glowing like a hidden fire in our
God forbid! For surely if we do so, *out of our own mouth*
e condemned, while we acknowledge the justice of the 34
ere passed against this *cruel servant.*
iimself has made the application: *so shall my heavenly* 35
il with you, if you do not forgive your brethren: and he
:ted us elsewhere to ask *forgiveness* only as we grant it;
14, 15). Let us then from this moment discharge our
:very sentiment of *rancour* and *revenge*, nor ever allow
· even a *wish*, that savours of it. And as ever we hope
sses to the throne of Divine mercy should meet with a
: audience, let us *lift up holy hands, without wrath,* as
thout doubting. (1 Tim. ii. 8.)

SECT. XCVI.

roves John for prohibiting one, who cast out demons in his because he was not of their company. Mark IX. 38—41. K. 49, 50.

K. 38. answered ing, Mas- one cast- ing

MARK IX. 38.

IN the midst of the preceding discourse, relat- SECT. XCVI.
ing to humility *and* self-denial, the apostle
John (whether desirous of diverting him from a Mark
subject which he could not hear pursued with- IX. 38.
out some consciousness of having deserved blame,
or thinking it might receive some farther illus-
tration by his remarks upon the case that he

SECT. xcvi.

should mention) interrupted our Lord[a], and *answered him*, when he had just been urging a readiness to receive one of the least of his servants in his name (Mark ix. 37. sect. xciii.) by *saying*, *Master*, while we were in our late progress, *we saw one casting out demons in thy name*[b], *who does not follow us*, nor converse with us as brethren: *and we forbade him* to do it any more, *because he does not follow* thee *among us*, and never had, as we apprehend, any regular commission from thee, and so might possibly have proved an occasion of neglect or reproach to the rest of thy disciples.

Mark IX. 38.

ing out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbade him, [because he followeth not with us.] [LUKE IX. 49].

39 *But Jesus said unto him*, *Do not forbid*, or go about to hinder *him* at present; *for*, by thus making use of my name, he appears to have some reverence and regard for me, and will not therefore set himself against me; since *there is no man who shall* be seen to *work* such *a miracle in my name*, *that can quickly*, or on any slight occasion, *speak evil of me*, or say any thing dishonourable of that name, for which he professes such a regard: And be that regard ever so imperfect, I would not discourage one who acts thus, now: *for*, with respect to such, and in a case like this, I may use a proverb (the reverse of that which I mentioned on a different occasion), and say, *Whosoever is not against us*, *is for us*[c]; and therefore I would by no means condemn a man for doing that, by which the kingdom of Satan is in fact weakened and my name

39 But Jesus said [unto him,] forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. [LUKE IX. 50.—]

40 For he that is not against us, is on our part. [LUKE IX. 50.]

[a] Interrupted our Lord.] I have inserted *this story* apart here, that the thread of the preceding discourse might not be broken; that the xciii *section* might not be lengthened beyond due bounds; and that I might have room to illustrate and improve this passage, which, though short, has both its difficulty and its use.

[b] *Casting out demons in thy name.*] Probably this was a case something resembling that of *the sons of Sceva*, (Acts xix. 13—16.) and God might see reason now to grant that efficacy to their adjuration, which he afterwards denied, when the evidences of the gospel were proposed so much more distinctly and fully, after the *descent of the Spirit*.—Dr. Clarke supposes that he was one of John the Baptist's disciples.

[c] *Whosoever is not against us, is for us.*] *Our Lord* had formerly said (Mat. xii. 30.) *He that is not with me, is against me*; thereby giving his hearers a just and necessary admonition that, on the whole, the war between him and Satan admitted of no *neutrality*, and that those who were *indifferent to him* would finally be treated as *his enemies*. (See *sect.* lxi. p. 323.) But here, in another view, he very consistently uses a different and seemingly opposite *proverb*, the counterpart of the former, directing his followers to judge of men's characters in the most candid manner, and charitably to hope that they, who did not oppose his cause, wished well to it; a conduct peculiarly reasonable, when his cause lay under so many discouragements. Probably many who now concealed their regard to him, were afterwards animated courageously to profess it, though at the greatest hazard. I cannot, with Mr. Baxter, think an express declaration of regard to Christ, to have been more necessary in the former case, than now; but it is most obvious, that Christ requires us to be more rigorous in *judging ourselves*, than he allows us to be in *judging each other*.

name glorified, though he have not my immediate and express commission. I rather take it in good part, as I am willing to do any thing that looks like a token of esteem and affection to me, be it ever so inconsiderable; *for*, as I formerly told you, (Mat. x. 42. p. 402), *whoever shall present you with a cup of* cold *water* only *in my name*, that is, *because you belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, He shall not lose his* proportionable *reward.* And so he went on to warn them of the danger of offending any of the weakest of his disciples, in the manner recounted and explained above. (See Mark ix. 42. sect. xciii.) And when he had concluded that discourse he not long after quitted Galilee. Compare Mat. xix. 1. sect. cxxxv.

SECT. XCVI.

Mark IX. 41.

For whosoever give you a cup ater to drink in name, because ye ig to Christ, ve- I say unto you, hall not lose his rd.

IMPROVEMENT.

T is sad that *the spirit*, which remains in so many *Christians*, in this instance appeared even in the beloved *Saint John*, ld (as the apostle *James* expresses it) *lust unto envy*; Jam. .) How ill does that spirit become a *disciple*, and much more *nister*, of the benevolent *Jesus!* The apostle *Paul* had learnt taught a better temper, when he *rejoiced, that Christ was ched*, even by those who were his personal enemies, (Phil. i. *To seek our own glory, is not glory*, Prov. xxv. 27.) and to ne religion to them that *follow us*, is a *narrowness of spirit* h we should avoid and abhor.

Mark IX. 38.

irist here gives us a lovely example of *candour* and *modera-* : he was willing to put the best construction on dubious , and to treat those as *friends*, who were not avowed and de- d *enemies*. Perhaps in this instance, it might be a means of coming a remainder of prejudice, and perfecting what was ing in the faith and obedience of the persons in question; at it suited the present state of things, in which men are to be ed of by their *professions* and *actions*, as their *hearts* cannot ediately and certainly be known.

39, 40

It let us *judge ourselves* with greater severity, remembering is an approaching *day, in which the secrets of all hearts will ide manifest*; in which those, who have indeed been *neuters* e war between *Christ and Satan*, will be treated as *enemies*; hose other words will be fulfilled, *He that is not with me, is st me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.* . xii. 30. and Luke xi. 23.)

that *day*, may the sincerity of our *hearts* be discovered, and then 41

SECT. XCVI. then we may rejoice in this repeated assurance, that the *least of our services* shall be kindly remembered, and abundantly *rewarded* according to the riches of Divine bounty and grace.

SECT. XCVII.

Our Lord sends out the seventy disciples with large instructions, like those he had before given to the twelve apostles. Luke X. 1.—16.

LUKE X. 1.

SECT. XCVII. *AFTER these things*, before he departed from Galilee, *the Lord* Jesus intending, when the approaching feast of tabernacles was over [a], to make one journey more over the country, in the last half year he was to spend on earth, *fixed upon seventy others* of his disciples *also*, besides the twelve apostles so frequently mentioned before (see Luke ix. i. *& seq.* sect. lxxiv.) *and sent them out before him, two and two*, together *into every city and* more private *place, into which he himself intended* shortly *to come*; and thus, as it were, he divided the whole country into thirty-five lesser circuits.

Luke X. 1.

LUKE X. 1.

AFTER these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face, into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

2 And at their setting out, he gave them many important instructions, nearly resembling those, which he had before addressed to the apostles; and as it was a large and copious field for service, on which they were to enter, *he said therefore to them* [b], as he had formerly done to their brethren

2 Therefore he said unto them, The harvest truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

[a] When the approaching feast of tabernacles was over.] It seems to be much more reasonable to suppose, that *Christ sent out the seventy* before the *feast of tabernacles* than after it; considering how little time he had between that and the *feast of dedication*, in which interval he dispatched his last circuit in Galilee. To take from *those three months* all the period to be allowed for their journey and return, seems inconvenient. But it is astonishing, that Mr. Le Clerc, and some others, should suppose that these instructions were given to them *in Christ's journey* to the above mentioned *feast*: for, not to mention the impossibility of holding a discourse with such a number of people on the road about an affair of such importance, it is expressly said, John vii. 10. that he *went up to the feast* of tabernacles *privately*; which is utterly inconsistent with his being attended with such a train as *seventy*, or (according to that author) *eighty-two* persons; for Le Clerc supposes the *twelve* were also with him.—I shall elsewhere give my reasons why I suppose the story of the *Samaritans refusing him entertainment* (though recorded Luke ix. 51—56,) to have happened later than this. (See *sect.* cxxvii. *note* a.) At present I would only observe, that the expression, *after these things*, in the beginning of this chapter, may either refer to the stories immediately preceding, in the close of the former, from ver 57. *to the end*, or to the general series of events recorded above, though (as I think the *evangelist* himself strongly intimates) one little history be transposed.

[b] *He said therefore to them.*] Luke is the only *evangelist*, who has given us this account of *Christ sending out the seventy*; and it is the less to be wondered at that he should do it so particularly, if the *ancient tradition* be true, which Origen and Epiphanius have mentioned, that he was himself *one* of the number. See *Dr. Whitby's Preface to Luke*, where he has shewn this to be highly probably, and no way inconsistent

SECT. XCVII.

Luke X. 2.

brethren, (Mat. ix. 37, 38. p. 387,) *The harvest is indeed great*, and many souls are to be gathered in, *but the* faithful *labourers are* as yet very *few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would*, by his immediate access to the spirits of men, *thrust forth* more *labourers into his harvest*, though the work may prove so fatiguing and hazardous, that they are naturally averse to it.[c]

3 Go your ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

3 And as for you, *go your ways* with all the resolution and zeal you can employ in your ministry, as indeed you will need it all; for *behold, I send you forth as* so many defenceless *lambs in the midst of* ravenous and cruel *wolves*. Yet as you go under the singular care of Divine Providence, *carry not* with you any *purse* of money, *nor* even a *scrip* for your provisions, *nor* any more *shoes* than you have now on your feet; *nor* stay so much as to *salute any man* as you pass *by* him on *the way*;[d] but let it evidently appear to all who see you, that your thoughts are full of the great errand on which you go.

4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes; and salute no man by the way.

5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace *be* to this house:

5 *And*, in all the stages of your journey, carry along with you those benevolent affections which are so well suited to the design of your mission: *into whatever house* therefore *you* shall happen to *come*, at your *first* entrance *say, Peace be upon this house* and pray that prosperity and happiness may attend the whole family.

6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

6 *And if any son* and heir *of peace*, or any truly good man who is worthy of such blessings, *be there* in the house, *your* prayer for *peace* and prosperity shall be answered, and *shall rest upon it; but if not, it* shall not be entirely lost, but *shall return upon you*, and you shall be the better for those kind and friendly sentiments, even though the wishes they dictate be not exactly answered.

And

sistent with what Luke has said at the beginning of his *gospel*.

c *That he would thrust forth* more *labourers*, &c.] As both Luke here, and Matthew in a parallel passage, (Mat. ix. 38.) use the word ἐκβάλῃ, which literally signifies to *thrust out*, I was willing to express the force of it in the *version* as well as the *paraphrase*. (See *note* k on Mat. ix. 38. *sect.* lxxii. p. 387.)—So many of the expressions used in *this discourse* are to be found in *that to the twelve*, *sect.* lxxiv. lxxv. that it is generally sufficient to refer to the *paraphrase* and *notes* there for the explication of them here.

d *Nor* stay to *salute any man*, as you pass *by* him on *the way*.] *Our Lord* did not intend by this to *forbid his disciples* in general, nor even any of his *ministers*, a decent use of the customary tokens of *civil respect* to others, any more than he *forbids* the use of *shoes* and *purses*; only while they were employed on this particular message, he required the forbearance of them, that every one, who saw them pass by, might perceive that their minds were full of the most important business, and that they were earnestly intent on the immediate dispatch of it. (Compare 2 Kings iv. 29.) This was the more necessary, as they were so much straitened for time. See above *note* a.

e *Wipe*

sect. xcvii.

Luke x. 7.

And when you are entered into any lodgings, *continue in the same house* as long as you stay in the town, cheerfully and contentedly *eating and drinking what you find with them; for* as, on the one hand, *the* common *labourer is worthy of his reward*, and therefore you who take so much pains to bring them to the greatest blessings, have much more right to your entertainment; so, on the other, it is beneath you to be very solicitous and nice about the manner of it; and therefore *do not* create an unnecessary trouble in the family where you are, or *go from one house to another*, in hope of better accommodations, during the short stay you make in a place.

7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give; for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8 *And*, I repeat it again, *Into whatever* town or *city you come, and they* receive and *entertain you* freely and cheerfully, be ready to accept their kindness to you, and without any difficulty *eat* and drink *such things as are set before you:*

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

9 *And* I am sure I put it into your power to make them an abundant recompense, when I commission you, as I do now, to *heal the sick that are in it, and to say unto them, The* long-expected *kingdom of God is come near unto you*, and therefore prepare yourselves thankfully to receive the blessings of it, which are thus freely offered to you by the Messiah.

9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10 *But into whatsoever city you come, and they* perversely set themselves against you, and *do not entertain you*, nor regard your message, *go out into the streets of it, and say*, in a most public and solemn manner, Since you reject so gracious and important a message, we cannot but consider you as rejected by God, and devoted to certain and inevitable destruction; *we* therefore separate ourselves from all that belongs to you, and *wipe off* from our feet, as a testimony *against you, even the very dust of your city, which cleaves to us*[e]; *nevertheless, know this assuredly, that the kingdom of God is come near unto you*, and in the midst of all the calamities which are to befal you, let your consciences witness that mercy hath been offered

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you; notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

[e] *Wipe off the very dust of your city*, &c.] For the import of this solemn action, see *sect.* lxxiv. *note* o, p. 392, from whence it will appear that *Dr. Edwards's* singular interpretation (*Edw. on Script.* Vol. II. p. 189—193) is not only foreign, but contrary to *our Lord's* purpose. He strangely supposes it an *allusion* to those *courts*, where, as in what we call *pie-powder* (or *pieds poudres*) *courts*, controversies were immediately decided, as it were, *before people could wipe the dust off their shoes.*

† He

12 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

offered and refused. *And I say unto you*, as I formerly did to your brethren, *That in that day* of the final judgment *it shall be more tolerable*, even *for* the accursed inhabitants of *Sodom* itself, *than for that city*, wheresoever it be found.

sect. xcvii.

Luke X. 12.

13 Wo unto thee, Chorazin, Wo unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

Now while our Lord was thus mentioning to his seventy disciples the wretched case of those that rejected the gospel, he could not forbear reflecting that this was the condition of some of those cities, where he himself had made the most frequent visits and the longest abode: he therefore repeated the pathetic lamentation he had before taken up for them[f], and said, On this account, *Wo unto thee, O* thou obstinate *Chorazin, Wo unto thee, O* thou incorrigible *Bethsaida; for if the wonders which have been wrought in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon*, degenerate as they were, *they would have repented long since, sitting in sackcloth, and* lying down in *ashes*, to express the depth of their humiliation and sorrow. 13

14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

But though vengeance has long since been executed upon them, God will make manifest the impartiality of his justice and *it shall be more tolerable, in the* day of his tremendous *judgment, for Tyre and Sidon, than for you.* 14

15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell.

And thou, O most ungrateful and rebellious *Capernaum, who hast been* distinguished from all the rest by my longest residence in thee, so that thou hast (as it were) been *lifted up to heaven* in that respect as well as in magnificence and wealth, *shall be brought down even to hell*, and sunk into the deepest and most irrecoverable ruin, since thou hast heard my gospel only to despise it. 15

16 He that heareth you, heareth me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth me: and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.

And then turning to the seventy disciples, who still stood around him, he concluded his instructions to them in these important words (to the same purpose as he before had said to the apostles, Mat. x. 40, sect. lxxvi.) *He that heareth you*, in the discharge of this your embassy, *heareth me; and*, on the other hand, *he that rejecteth you*, in like manner *rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me, rejecteth him that sent me*, even 16

[f] He repeated the pathetic lamentation, &c.] Considering the affectionate temper of *our Lord*, it is no wonder that he should renew his *lamentation* over those unhappy places, where he had so intimately conversed; and that he should do it in such words as these, so well calculated to alarm and impress all that should hear or read them. Oh! that they might *now* have their due weight with those, who might pass them over too slightly, when they occurred *before*, in Mat. xi. 20—24. (See *sect.* lix. p. 309, 310.) Oh! that every impenitent creature who reads them might know *that the sentence of his own condemnation is now before his eyes.*

SECT. XCVII.

even the Father himself, whose credentials I bear, and who will punish the despisers of the gospel, as impious rebels, who presume to contemn his Infinite Majesty, and provoke his almighty power.

Luke X. 16.

IMPROVEMENT.

So unwilling was the *blessed Jesus* to give over his kind attempts for men's salvation! He projected *another circuit* through the country, and sends forth *other messengers*, more numerous than the former company. He renews his *invitations* to perish-
13, 15 ing sinners, and his *lamentations* over those, who had hitherto *rejected the counsel of God against themselves*; (Luke vii. 30.) Thus let us love the souls of men; thus let us use repeated endeavours to deliver them; endeavours which would probably be much more successful than they are, if these wise and gracious directions of *Christ* to his *ministers* were more attentively observed by those who are honoured with that important office.

3, 4 Let all such *cast their care upon God*; let them *go forth* cheerfully in a dependence on his protection and favour; let them carry about with them hearts full of affection for the whole hu-
5 man race, seeking and praying for the *peace* of all around them;
7, 8 cheerfully *contenting themselves with such things as they have* (Heb. xiii. 5); and neither pursuing the grandeurs nor the delicacies of life with any eager attachment.

2 *Send forth, O Lord,* such *labourers into thine harvest*, and animate them to a becoming zeal in their work, by a deep sense of that dreadful *condemnation*, which *those* will incur, who *despising*
16 *them*, pour contempt on their *Divine Master*, and *his heavenly Father*, in whose name he was *sent!* May God preserve *our coun-*
11 *try* from that guilt and ruin! *The kingdom of God is come nigh unto* us, and we are *lifted up to heaven* by our privileges: may we
15 not, after all, *be cast down to hell* for the abuse of them! but may Divine grace make such *a way* for the gospel *into our hearts*, that we may cordially *receive* all who faithfully proclaim it, and *bid them welcome in the name of the Lord!*

SECT. XCVIII.

Christ discourses with his brethren about his going up to the feast of tabernacles, and stays some time after them. John VII. 1—13.

JOHN VII. 1.

SECT. XCVIII.

John VII. 1.

AFTER these things, that is, after he had miraculously fed the five thousand, walked on the sea to his disciples, and discoursed with the multitude

JOHN VII. 1.

AFTER these things Jesus walked in Galilee;

Galilee; for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

multitude concerning the bread of life[a], *Jesus* for some time *walked*, or travelled, as we before observed, *in Galilee*, and there instructed his disciples (see sect. xcii.) *for he would not* then *walk* or converse familiarly *in Judea*[b], *because the Jews*, and more especially their rulers, incensed by the growing fame of his miracles, and the freedom of his discourses, *sought* an opportunity *to slay him*, either by private assassination, tumultuous assault, or legal process.

SECT. XCVIII.

John VII. 1.

2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.

And a very noted *feast of the Jews was* then *near*, which is [*called*] *the feast of tabernacles*; instituted in commemoration of their dwelling in tents in the wilderness, and celebrated in booths erected for that purpose, with great solemnity and joy. (See Lev. xxiii. 34, *& seq.*) 2

3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest:

Therefore his brethren, or near kinsmen in Galilee, *said unto him*, We would advise thee to *remove from hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also* who are there, *may*, for the confirmation of their faith in thee, behold thy miracles, and *see the* mighty *works which thou performest* here: 3

4 For *there is* no man *that* doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly: if thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

For this retirement seems not at all to suit the great pretensions thou art making to a public and extraordinary character; as it is well known that *no man will* choose to *act any* remarkable *thing in secret, that is himself desirous*, like thee, *to be publicly known* and talked of[c]: *if*, therefore *thou* art really the promised Messiah, and *performest these things*, which we so often see at home, by a Divine commission, go up to Jerusalem, and there *manifest thyself to the* great men of the *world*, and appear in places of the most public concourse; and thou canst not have a better opportunity of doing it, than at this celebrated feast, which brings together so many, not only from the land of Israel, 4

5 For neither did his

but from neighbouring countries. This they said, not out of any real friendship and respect, but 5

[a] *After these things*, &c.] Those that I have mentioned here are *the last* which had been recorded by John. See a more particular account of them, *sect.* lxxviii—lxxxii.

[b] *He would not walk in Judea.*] This may be an intimation, either that he was not at Jerusalem the preceding *passover*, or at least made no public appearance or long abode there. I am inclined to think the former was the case.—Undoubtedly, his *omission* of a journey thither, at some of the *great feasts*, might be vindicated by his extraordinary character, and those intimations he might have from his heavenly Father, of being *dispensed with*, for reasons not particularly known to us, who have no concern with them. See *note* b, *sect.* lxxxiii. p. 438.

[c] *That is himself desirous to be publicly known* and talked of.] This seems to be a very invidious and groundless insinuation, as if he was actuated by *ostentatious views*; the contrary to which appeared so evidently in the whole of his conduct, that nothing but base envy could suggest such a charge.

[d] *Neither*

SECT. xcviii.

but to make farther trial of him, and in some measure to upbraid him with those precautions which he thought proper to observe; *for*, notwithstanding all the evidences he had given of his Divine mission, yet *neither did his brethren* and kindred themselves *believe in him*, when they saw that he took no such method to raise himself and his family, as they thought inseparable from the character of the Messiah, whenever he should appear[d].

his brethren believe in him.

John VII. 5.

6 *Then Jesus said unto them, My time* either to manifest myself, or to go up to Jerusalem, *is not yet come; but your time is always ready*, and such a circumstance in your case is comparatively of very little importance. You have no reason to fear any injury or assault, as *the world cannot hate you*[e], because it is on principles of carnal wisdom that you act, and so have nothing in your conduct that may draw upon you any particular opposition; *but me it hates*, not on account of any ill action which I have committed, but *because*, from a zeal for truth, and a desire of its reformation, *I bear my testimony concerning it, that its deeds are evil. Do you* therefore *go up to this feast*, whenever you please, without waiting for me; and acquiesce in what I now tell you, that *I do not as* [*yet*] *go up to this feast*[f]; *for* that which I judge *my* most convenient *time* of doing it, *is not yet fully come*, nor do I need to

6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready.

7 The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

8 Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast, for my time is not yet full come.

d *Neither did his brethren believe in him*, &c.] It is astonishing that these *near relations* of Christ, who must have had so many opportunities of seeing the glories both of his character and miracles (which last they here expressly acknowledge) should continue in *unbelief*. But they unhappily laid it down as a first principle, that the Messiah must be a *temporal Prince*; and finding this mark of his mission wanting, and seeing (more strongly than others, not so intimately conversant with him, could do) his aversion to any such scheme, they would yield to no other proofs; and are, I fear, on the fatal list of those who perished, as thousands now do, by opposing *hypothesis* to *fact*. See *Dr. Sykes on the Truth of Christianity*, p. 128.

e *The world cannot hate you.*] These words, gentle as they may appear, contain a most awful insinuation, that these *his kinsmen* were persons governed entirely by *carnal views*, and therefore destitute of the love of God, and all well-grounded hope from him.

f *I do not yet go up to this feast.*] The reader may observe that I enclose the word [*yet*] which answers to ουπω in the *original*, in *crotchets*; and the reason is, because I do indeed doubt, whether it was in the *oldest copies*. And this doubt arises, not merely from Porphyry's objecting against this as a *falsehood* (for frequent experience has taught us how little the enemies of *Christianity* are to be trusted in their representations of *scripture*,) but from observing that Jerom, and the other most ancient fathers, who reply to that objection, do not found their answer on his citing the passage wrong, but as they justly might, on the intimation *our Lord* gave of his intending shortly to go to *the feast*, in that expression, *My time is not yet fully come*.—It is a glorious testimony to the unblemished integrity of *our Lord's* character, that so cunning and inveterate an *enemy* was forced to have recourse to such mean and ridiculous methods of aspersing it. See *Dr. Mill* on *this text*, and *Cleric. de Arte Critica*, part. iii. p. 232.

to be directed by you in my conduct on such occasions as these. SECT. XCVIII.

9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee.

10 But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

Now when he had said these things unto them, he left them to go up alone, while *he continued* [*still*] *in Galilee* for a few days longer: *But when his brethren* or kindred *were gone up, then he also* himself *went up to the feast*[g], *not publicly* with a train of attendants, as he had often done[h], *but as it were in secret,* with as much privacy as he could. John VII. 9. 10

11 Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?

The Jews therefore, not seeing him appear as usual, *sought for him at the* beginning of the *feast, and said,* What is become of Jesus, and *where is he?* or what can have prevented his coming up to the feast[i]? 11

12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay, but he deceiveth the people.

And there was, in the mean time, *a great murmuring among the people concerning him; for some said* (as they had, from the whole tenor of his life, the utmost reason to conclude) *Surely* [k] *he is* an eminently pious and *a good man: but others,* under the force of strong prejudices, suspected the worst, and *said, Nay,* that cannot be, *but he* certainly *seduces the* ignorant *populace,* however he comes by this power of doing it; and the wisest part of mankind must see that he will undoubtedly at last draw his followers into ruin, as some other impostors have lately done. (See Acts v. 36, 37.) 12

13 Howbeit, no man spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.

Thus they privately debated the matter; *howbeit, no one,* that thought favourably of him, *spoke* his mind *with freedom concerning him*[l], *for fear of the* rulers among the *Jews,* who were jealous of his growing fame, and looked with a very malignant eye on all who took any peculiar notice of Jesus. 13

IMPROVE-

g *He also went up to the feast.*] *Our Lord* might know of some circumstance of particular danger, which might have rendered *his going up* at the usual time, and in company with his brethren, unsafe, and therefore improper.

h *Not publicly* with a train of attendants, &c.] I look on this as a most certain argument that the story in Luke ix. 51—56, cannot (as most *commentators* suppose) relate to this journey; since it is so evident he was then attended with a numerous train of followers. Compare *note* a, *sect.* XCVII.

i *Where is he?* or what can have prevented his coming up to the feast?] If *our Lord* had absented himself from the *two preceding feasts* (which perhaps the expostulations of *his brethren,* ver. 3, 4, may imply) there was yet an obvious reason for the *surprise* which *this question* expresses; or undoubtedly *our Lord* used generally to attend on these occasions. See p. 436. *sect.* lxxxiii. *note* b.

k *Surely.*] It is possible, as our *translators* have supposed, that the word *ότι* here may be only an *expletive;* but to me it seems probable that it may not improperly be rendered *surely,* or *truly,* which is accordingly the sense that I have sometimes given it.—We should not, I think, unnecessarily conclude a word to be quite *insignificant* in any writer of credit and character, especially in the *sacred penmen.*

l *No one,* that thought favourably of him, &c.] The reason afterwards given renders such a *restriction* absolutely necessary. Those that thought *contemptibly* of Christ might have spoken their minds as *freely* as they pleased.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. XCVIII. Ver. 5.

We see how little the greatest external advantages can do without the Divine blessing, when some of the *nearest relations* of *Christ* himself, by whom he had been most intimately known, were not prevailed upon to *believe in him*. Who then can wonder if some remain incorrigible in the most regular and pious families? How much more valuable is *the union* to him, which is founded on a cordial and obedient *faith*, than *that* which arose from the *bands of nature?* and how cautiously should we watch against those *carnal prejudices*, by which even the *brethren of Christ* were alienated from him?

1, 8 *Our Lord*, we see, used a prudent care to avoid persecution and danger, till *his time was fully come*; and it is our duty to endeavour, by all wise and upright precautions, to secure and preserve ourselves, that we may have opportunities for farther service.

In the course of such service we must expect, especially if we appear under a public character, to meet with a variety of *cen-*
12 *sures*; but let us remember that *Jesus* himself went *through evil report and good report*; by some applauded as *a good man*, but by others, and those the greater part of his countrymen, condemned as *deceiving the people*. Let us learn of *Christ* patiently to endure such injurious treatment; and endeavour to behave ourselves so, that we may have a *testimony* in the consciences of men, and in the presence of God, that, after the example of our great Master, *in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have our conversation in the world*; (2 Cor. i. 12.) Then will our names be had in remembrance, and the honour and reward of our faithful obedience continued, when the memories of those that reviled us are perished with them.

SECT. XCIX.

Christ, going up privately to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, vindicates his conduct, and farther urges the proofs of his Divine mission. John VII. 14—24.

JOHN VII. 14.

SECT. XCIX. John VII. 14.

THUS were the Jews divided in their sentiments about our blessed Lord, and though they eagerly inquired after him, they knew not where to find him: but *now in the midst of the feast* of tabernacles, about the third or fourth day,

JOHN VII. 14.

NOW about the midst of the feast, Jesus went

went up into the temple, and taught.

day, *Jesus went up* to Jerusalem and entered publicly *into the temple, and taught* the people, who were in vast multitudes assembled there. SECT. XCIX. John VII. 15.

15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

And the Jews who heard him, *were amazed, saying, How does this man understand letters*[a]? or how comes he to be so well acquainted with sacred literature, as to be able thus to expound the scriptures, and to apply himself to us with such gracefulness and propriety, *having never learned* these arts of address at any place of public education?

16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

Jesus answered them, and said, There is no such reason why you should wonder at this; for *my doctrine*, or that which I now teach you, *is not mine* own invention, or what I have learnt by any common method of inquiry; *but* it is entirely *his that sent me*, and I learned it by immediate inspiration from him. 16

17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

And if you desire rightly to enter into the evidences of it, you must make it your great care to maintain an honest and religious temper; for *if any one be* resolutely *determined* to observe the dictates of my heavenly Father, and *to do his will*[b], though ever so contrary to the impulse of a corrupt nature, *he shall* then quickly *understand, whether my doctrine be of God, or whether I speak* it *of myself*; for the evidence is plain to an honest mind, and the correspondence which such a truly good man will find between the whole system of my doctrine and his own inward experience, will be unto him instead of a thousand speculative arguments. 17

18 He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh

In the mean time you might observe something, even in the very manner of my teaching, sufficient to convince you that I am no impostor: for *he that*, in such a circumstance, and with such pretensions, *speaks of himself*, without any Divine commission, will govern himself 18

[a] *How does this man understand letters?*] I see no reason to believe that *our Lord* adorned his discourses with quotations from, or references to, the writers that were then most celebrated for their learning, or shewed any extraordinary acquisitions in *history, antiquities*, &c. The *evangelists* have given us no specimen of this kind; and it is certain that *foreign literature* was then in great contempt among the Jews. The words undoubtedly refer to *our Lord's* great acquaintance with the *scriptures*, and the judicious and masterly manner in which he taught the people out of them, with far greater majesty and nobler eloquence than the *scribes* could attain to by a learned education.—Compare Mark i. 22, and Mat. vii. 29, p. 240, *note* g.

[b] *Be determined to do his will.*] This seems to be the import of those words, Θελη το Θελημα αυτου ποιειν. (See *sect.* xxii. *note* a, p. 126.)—This important passage seems an express declaration that every *upright man*, to whom the gospel is proposed, will see and own the evidence of its Divine authority; which indeed might reasonably have been concluded from the awful *judgment* pronounced on those, who presume to reject it.

SECT. XCIX.

himself by secular views; and a sagacious observer will soon see that he *is seeking his own glory* and interest, even under the most self-denying forms: *but he that* in the whole of his conduct shews that he *seeks the glory* of God, as *of him that* he declares to have *sent him*, gives great reason to believe that *he is true* and sincere in that declaration, *and* that *there is no unrighteousness* or imposture *in him*[c].

seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

John VII. 18.

19 But your character is the very reverse of this, and you cannot but know it in your own conscience: for let me upon this occasion call you to reflect on your own conduct, and appeal to that: *hath not Moses given you the law*, and do you not eagerly contend for its Divine original? *and yet none of you observes the law*, which he has given you. If you deny the charge, let me remind you of that grand precept, "Thou shalt not kill," and then ask you, *Wherefore do you go about to kill me*, though an innocent and upright person, who am come to bring you a most important message from God?

19 Did not Moses give you the law, and *yet* none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?

20 This Jesus said with reference to what he knew to be the secret design of some of his hearers, who were even then plotting his destruction; but *the multitude*, who were not aware of it, ignorantly and rudely *answered and said*, Surely *thou art possessed*, and distracted[d], to talk thus; dost thou not safely travel from place to place, and appear in our most public assemblies, even here at Jerusalem, and *who goes about* or desires *to kill thee?*

20 The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?

21 *Jesus*, referring to the design which he knew some of them had of renewing their prosecution against him as a sabbath-breaker, because he had commanded the disabled man at the pool of Bethesda to carry his bed on that day (compare John. v. 16. p. 255), *answered* in the gentlest manner, *and said unto them, I have* some time ago

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

c *No unrighteousness* or imposture *in him.*] The word αδικια, in this opposition to αληθης, must signify *imposture*. Yet I think it the fairest way to translate the *original* words in all their extent, and content myself with suggesting in the *paraphrase* those *limitations*, which the particular connection requires.

d *Thou art possessed*, and distracted.] So some of them express it, John x. 20, *He hath a devil, and is mad:* which plainly shews (as many have observed) that they thought some of the worst kind and degrees of *lunacies* proceeded from the agency of some *demon:* as many considerable *Greek writers* plainly did. (See *Bos, Exercit.* p. 41—43.) But it can never be argued from hence, that *possession* and *lunacy* are universally *synonimous terms*. When joined together they seem to signify *different things;* the former being put for the *cause*, and the latter for the *effect*.

e *I have*

ago *performed one* remarkable *work*[e], and *you all*, to this very day, *wonder on account of it*[f], that I should order the man I cured to carry his couch on the sabbath-day: Yet a little reflection might convince you that your cavil is very unreasonable, even on your own principles: for *Moses gave you* a precept, which required *circumcision*, *(not that it is* originally *of Moses* his institution, *but* had been formerly established by the observation of Abraham, and *of the* other *fathers* of our nation, many ages before Moses was born, which therefore could not properly be altered by him[g];) *and you* scruple not to *circumcise a man*-child *on the sabbath-day*, if it happen to be the eighth from his birth. *If* [*then*] *to prevent the violation of Moses his law* by deferring this sacred rite, you acknowledge it fit, that *a man* should *receive circumcision on the sabbath* itself; [*why*] *are you incensed against me, that*, by speaking a word, *I have cured a man*, who was *entirely* disabled[h], *on the sabbath*; as if it was a more servile work to heal than to wound? or how do you imagine that I have not power, when I have thus healed him, to manifest the perfection of the cure, by commanding him

22 Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers,) and ye on the sabbath-day circumcise a man.

23 If a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath-day?

23

e *I have* some time ago *performed one* remarkable *work.*] It is plain the *miracle* here referred to was wrought *a year and a half* before *this feast.* Compare sect. xlvi. *note* [a], p. 250.

f *And you all: order on account of it.*] I here follow Theophylact and Beza in joining the words δια τουτο to the end of *this verse*, because it is certain that in their usual signification they cannot properly introduce the next; and John xiv. 11, *(sect.* clxxxviii.) may be an instance of the like kind.—The *Prussian translators* render it, *Because Moses gave you circumcision*, &c. and the learned *Elsner* inclines to this version: *(Elsner, Observ.* Vol. I. p. 314, 315.) But though I am sensible ὁ τι often sometimes signifies *because* (see Gen. xxxviii. 26. Numb. x. 31. and xiv. 43, *Septuag.* and *Heb.)* I cannot find δια τουτο ever so used; and I think, if it be retained at the beginning of the *next verse*, it should be rendered, *As to this matter*; which sense it may perhaps have in Mat. xiii. 52. xviii. 23. and in a few other places; and so Grotius takes it here. See *Dr. Whitby* on this place.

g *Not that it is* originally *of Moses*, &c.] An excellent person, justly celebrated in the learned world, has lately suggested to me a thought on these words (which I have not met with elsewhere, but have briefly hinted in the *paraphrase)* as to the reason why *our Lord* makes this obvious remark, that *circumcision* was *older* than the time of Moses. Had Moses instituted it he would probably have ordered it so as to make it quadrate with *his law* relating to the *strict rest* of the *sabbath*; but finding it instituted by a previous *covenant*, which his *law could not disannul*, (see Gal. iii. 17.) he left it still on the same footing. This argument will indeed infer that the strict *sabbatical rest* was not observed in the *patriarchal age*; but yet it might be a day of *extraordinary devotion*, which I apprehend to be proved from Gen. ii. 3.

h *I have cured a man entirely.*] *Our translation* loses much of the *emphasis*: the words ολον ανθρωπον υγη εποιησα literally signify, *I have healed*, or made sound, *a whole man.* But the ambiguity in our *English* word *whole* rendered such a *version* very improper. I therefore thought it necessary a little to vary the *expression*, but the *sense* is altogether the same.—But, since I published this, a very accurate *critic*, both in the Greek and English language, has suggested another *version*, yet more literal than this, or any of the rest: *I have made a man sound throughout.*

SECT. XCIX.

John VII. 24.

him to carry his couch[i]? *Judge not according to* these prejudices, which the meanness of my *appearance* tends to produce; *but judge righteous* and equitable *judgment*; which if you do, you must necessarily acknowledge my Divine mission to be as evident and certain as that of Moses himself, to whose precepts you profess so great a regard.

24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 16, 18 LET us learn of our meek and humble *Master* to refer the *honour* of all we know and do to *Divine instruction* communicated to us, and *Divine grace* working in and by us; that, *seeking the glory of God*, we may have the surest evidence, that we are truly *his*. Let us on all occasions remember that *integrity* and *uprightness* will be a certain security to us against dangerous *mistakes* in matters of religion. If *the light* we already have, be faithfully improved, we may humbly hope that more will be given in; nor 17 shall we then fail of convincing evidence, that the *gospel-doctrine is of God*; for the experience of its power on our hearts will check our *passions*, and destroy the prejudices, that would prevent the *truth* from taking place in our minds.

Let us receive *his doctrine* as *Divine*, and hearken unto *Christ* as *sent of God*; and whatsoever be the vile *reproaches* we may meet with from a wicked world, and the malicious *designs* it may form against us, let us be resolute and stedfast in the practice of the 19 duties he has taught us, that *with well-doing we may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.* (1 Peter ii. 15.)

Our Lord was reviled as a *demoniac* and a *lunatic*: but instead 20 of *rendering railing for railing*, he replied in the words of gentleness and sobriety. So let us endeavour to conquer the rudeness of those *attacks* we may meet with in his cause; that we may, if 21--23 possible, remove the *prejudices* so fatal to those that entertain them, and form men to that equitable and impartial *judgment*, 24 which would soon turn all their cavils against *Christ* into admiration, praise and obedience.

SECT.

i That I have not power, when I have thus healed him, &c.] So *our Lord* himself states the argument in a case nearly resembling this, (Mat. ix. 5, 6, p. 248.) and might probably here intend to insinuate it, though in an oblique manner.

a He

SECT. C.

The Jews pass a variety of censures on Christ; and the sanhedrim alarmed by the regard which some expressed towards him, send officers to seize him; but Christ openly declares that their purposes should not immediately take effect. John VII. 25—30.

JOHN VII. 25.

THEN said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill?

JOHN VII. 25.

THEN, while our Lord was thus discoursing at the feast of tabernacles, *some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem*, who knew more of the designs of the sanhedrim than others who had spoken before (ver. 20.) *said, Is not this he whom they seek* an opportunity *to put to death? But behold, he* is not only come up hither to the feast, but *speaks openly* and freely in the very temple itself; *and they* are so far from seizing him, that they *do not* so much as *say any thing to* prohibit *him: do the rulers* then *indeed know* they were mistaken in their former censures, and are they now persuaded in their consciences *that this is really the Messiah? But we* have sufficient reason to conclude this cannot be the case; for many of us *know this man*, from *whence he is*, and are sure that he was born of Joseph's wife: *whereas, when the Messiah comes, no man will* thus *know* from *whence he is;* for he is to be born in a miraculous way of a virgin [a].

SECT. C. John VII. 25.

26 But lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him: Do the rulers know indeed, that this is the very Christ?

26

27 Howbeit, we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

27

28 Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am; and

Then Jesus, though they said this in a private manner to each other, and imagined that he could not have heard them, *as he was teaching in the temple*, and at some distance from them, *cried out* with a louder voice than before, *and said, Do ye* indeed *both know me, and know* from *whence I am* [b]? Alas, it is great rashness and folly for you to assert it; and whatever you may object,

28

[a] He is to be born in a miraculous way of a virgin.] It is evident from Mat. ii. 4, 5, that the Jews apprehended the Messiah was to be *born at Bethlehem*; and from a multitude of other places, that they knew he was to be a *descendant of David*; (compare ver. 42.) I know not how therefore to account for their saying that, *when Christ came, no man would know whence he is*, but by supposing, with *Archbishop Tillotson*, (Vol. II. p. 454.) that the words refer to an expectation they had that he would be *born of a virgin*.—As for the notion which Justin Martyr mentions, that the Messiah should for a while *be hid*, it seems more modern; and they must put a strange interpretation on Isa. liii. 8. Mic. v. 2. and Psal. cx. 4. to draw any such consequence from them, as Dr. Whitby and Mr. L'Enfant suppose they did.

[b] *Do you both know me, and know whence I am?*] So *Bishop Chandler* would render these words (see his *Defence*, p. 334); and it seems necessary, in order to vindicate the *propriety*, and indeed the *veracity*, of the reply; unless with Beza and Camerarius we suppose it to be spoken *ironically*.

SECT. c.

John VII. 28.

object, *yet*, it is most certain, that *I am not come of myself*, with vain and false pretences to a Divine mission, nor do I want any proper evidences of it; *but he who sent me is true* to all his promises and predictions[c], *whom* nevertheless, with

and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.

29 all your boasts, *ye know not. But I know him* in a most intimate manner; *for I am* sprung *from him*[d] by a mysterious and Divine generation, in consequence of which I am infinitely better acquainted with him than you, or any mere creatures, can be; *and he hath sent me* among you, as his Ambassador, on an errand of the highest importance.

29 But I know him, for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

30 *Then* they were so provoked by this claim of a Divine original, and by the charge advanced against them, as ignorant of that God, in whom they gloried as so peculiarly their own, that *they sought* an opportunity *to seize him; yet* God impressed their minds in such a manner, that *no one* of them would be the first that *laid hands on him:* and they were kept under this visible restraint, *because his* appointed *hour* of suffering *was not yet come*, but he had farther services in life to dispatch, before he was delivered to them.

30 Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.

31 *And many of the people* were so much affected with these discourses, that they secretly *believed on him, and said* to each other, *When the Messiah comes, will* it be possible *he* should *do greater miracles than these which this* [*Jesus*] *has done* here at Jerusalem, and over the whole country?

31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done?

32 This, however, could not be so privately said, but some information of it was sent to *the Pharisees*, who, when they *heard that the people whispered such things concerning him*, were greatly displeased, and alarmed at it: *and the Pharisees and* the other members of the grand sanhedrim, particularly *the chief priests*, among whom there were many Sadducees (see Acts iv. 1), *sent officers* from the chamber in which they held their council[e], into the adjacent court of the

32 The Pharisees heard, that the people murmured such things concerning him: and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

c *Is true* to all his promises and predictions.] There seems a reference here to the accomplishment of some of the *prophecies* already fulfilled in him, together with a cheerful *faith* in what was yet to come.

d *I am from him.*] I should have chosen to render παρ' αὐτοῦ, *with him*, as I did in the *first edition* to avoid a *tautology*; but I am sensible on farther reflection, that I want a sufficient authority for such a *version*. I therefore acquiesce in *our own*: but I see no occasion to vary any thing in the *paraphrase*, since in *either sense* it suggests so strong a reason for believing that Christ had the most intimate *knowledge* of the *Father*.

e From the chamber in which they held their council.] See *sect.* xxiv. *note* f, p. 138.

Will

the temple, *to seize him*, as he preached there to the multitude. SECT. C.

hen said Jesus
m, Yet a little
m I with you,
I go unto him
t me.

Then Jesus said to them, as soon as they appeared, I know the design on which some of you are come, but God will not permit you immediately to execute it; for *yet a little while* longer *I am* to continue *with you, and* [*then*] *I* am to *go* again *to him that sent me*. And when I am returned to him, I shall be entirely out of your reach; so that *you shall seek me, and* wish that you had me in your power again, but you *shall not find me, and where I am*, or where I shall then, and always be, *you cannot* possibly *come*: which he said, referring to his speedy exaltation to the heavenly world, and to the impotent malice with which they should then oppose his triumphant cause. John VII. 33. 34

: shall seek me,
ll not find *me*:
re I am, *thither*
ot come.

hen said the
among them-
Whither will
that we shall
him? will he
the dispersed
the Gentiles,
h the Gentiles?

But he was not understood in that sense; *the Jews therefore* who were present *said among themselves, Whither he is about to go, that we shall not find him? Will he* leave Judea, and *go to the* remainders of the holy seed, who are *dispersed among the Greeks* and other nations? *and* will he *teach* them, or *the Greeks* themselves[f], even the idolatrous Gentiles, after his being thus rejected by his own nation at home and abroad? 35

hat *manner of*
is this that he
: shall seek me,
ll not find *me*:
re I am, *thither*
ot come?

What [*sort of*] *saying is this which he has* now *spoken, You shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, you cannot* possibly *come?* Thus they continued cavilling at his words; yet were so overawed by his presence, that they did not dare to offer him any violence, notwithstanding the commission with which some of them came. 36

IMPROVEMENT.

confident is *error* in its own decisions, and so vain in its applauses! These unhappy people, every way mistaken, censure 26, 27

ill he go to the dispersed among the and teach the Greeks?] By Greeks here to understand *idolatrous Gen*nd not *Hellenists*, or Jews that used ek language; for *these* were *the dis*among *them*. There is therefore, I *a sting* in these words beyond what *tators* have observed. They insithat if he was to go into foreign es, to address himself to the Jews who might be supposed not so well instructed as those that lived in Judea and at Jerusalem, he would not be able to make any *proselytes*, even among *these*; but would be constrained to apply himself to the ignorant and stupid Gentiles, to seek *disciples* among them: which to be sure appeared to these *haughty scorners* one of the most infamous circumstances that could be imagined, and most incompatible with the character of the true Messiah.

SECT. c. censure *their rulers* for a supposed credulity, in seeming, as it were, to acquiesce in *Christ's* claim to be *the Messiah;* and

John VII. 26, 27. imagined themselves, no doubt, exceeding wise in rejecting him, while they blindly took it for granted he was the *son of Joseph,* and had not patience to wait for the authentic story of his miraculous conception. Surely men had need to look well to the force of those arguments, on which they venture their souls by rejecting the gospel.

28 *Our Lord* answered their *secret reasoning,* in a manner which might justly have alarmed them, charging them with ignorance of *that God,* whom they pretended to *know,* and whom, with a presumptuous confidence, they claimed as *theirs.* And oh, that it may not be found at last, that many who have appeared most confident of their interest in God, neither know him, nor are *known by him!*

29 The blessed *Jesus,* who is *the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his Person,* has the completest *knowledge* of the *Father.* May we be so wise and happy as to seek instructions from him, *that the eyes of our understandings may be enlightened,* and the temper of our hearts proportionably regulated, by all the discoveries of the Divine Being which he makes!

How obstinate and desperately hardened were the hearts of those, who, notwithstanding all the proofs that *Jesus* gave of his

30, 32 *Divine mission,* were yet so far from hearkening to him, as to *seek* opportunities *to destroy him!* So dangerous and fatal is the prevalence of *error* in such as *like not to retain God in their knowledge,* that they will even venture on the greatest wickedness, when once they are *given over to a reprobate mind,* (Rom. i. 28.) —May God preserve us from *a spirit of delusion,* and fill us with that *wisdom,* that we may *know the things belonging to our peace;* and, being ready to *receive the truth in the love of it,* may we acknowledge and attend to *Christ* as *sent of God!*

34 May we learn this heavenly wisdom in time, since the hour is approaching, when *Christ* will be *sought in vain,* and all correspondence between him and sinners will be finally cut off! *Where he is, they cannot* then *come;* and to be excluded from him will at length appear insupportable misery, even to those, who, with proud folly and fatal self-sufficiency, are now most ready to say unto him, *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of* thee or *thy ways.* (Job xxi. 14.)

SECT.

SECT. CI.

Christ invites his hearers to come and imbibe the spirit from him; and by these and other gracious discourses disarms the resolution of the officers, who return to the sanhedrim without him; where a short debate arises between Nicodemus and his brethren. **John VII. 37, *to the end.***

John VII. 37.

IN the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

John VII. 37.

SUCH were the discourses, which our Lord made to the people in the presence of those, who were sent by the sanhedrim to seize him; and this happened *in the* eighth and *last day, that great* [*day*] *of the feast* of tabernacles, when, according to the institution of Moses (Lev. xxiii. 34, 36; Numb. xxix. 35), there was to be an holy convocation, attended with some extraordinary sacrifices. Now on this day, when it was customary for the priests to surround the altar with their palm-branches, and to pour out water in the temple, as an expression of the general desire of the Messiah's appearance, and the pouring forth of the Spirit by him[a], *Jesus stood* on an eminence, that he might be the better heard and seen, *and proclaimed* with a loud voice, *saying, If any man thirst*, that is, if he ardently desire true happiness, and long for the blessings promised under the administration of the Messiah, *let him come unto me* by faith, *and drink* his fill; for I am most ready freely to communicate every needful blessing, and particularly those supplies of the Spirit, which you profess so earnestly to desire. (Compare Isa. lv. 1.) For *he that* truly *believeth on me, as the scripture hath* in many places *said* and promised[b], shall receive those supplies

SECT. ci. John VII. 37.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture

38

[a] When it was customary for the priests to pour out water, &c.] That there was a custom on this day of *drawing water* out of the fountain of Siloam, and *pouring it out before the Lord* in the temple at the time of evening sacrifice, and that the *priest* who did it *stood* on some eminence, the *Jewish rabbies* unanimously assure us. (See *Reland's Antiq. Heb.* part iv. cap. 6, § 6.) Some think it was intended to supplicate *the former rain:* but the context inclines me much rather to believe those Jewish writers produced by *Dr. Lightfoot* (in his *Hor. Heb.* on this place), who say, it was meant as a way of invoking the Divine influences of *the blessed Spirit*, and as a mark of their desire of having it *poured out* upon them. See *Tremellius's* excellent *note* on this text.

[b] *As the scripture hath* in many places *said* and promised.] Chrysostom, and after him many other eminent *critics*, refer this to the former clause, and understand it as if he had said, *He that hath that faith in me which the scripture requires:* (see *Cornelius, Segerus, Jac. Cappellus, in loc.*) And thus they avoid the difficulty which arises from our not finding the following words in *scripture*.—But it seems much more natural, with Grotius, to suppose that here is a *general reference* to the several *prophecies* which

SECT. ci.

John VII. 38. supplies in so great an abundance, that he shall not only be refreshed himself, but *out of his belly* or from within him [c], *shall flow* vital streams, and, as it were, *rivers of living water*, for the refreshment and comfort of others.

scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 *Now this*, which was true in a more extensive sense, *he* peculiarly *spake of the Spirit* [d], *which they who believe on him should receive*, and which some of them should also be enabled to communicate to others. But it was not then generally understood: *for the Holy Spirit was not yet* [*given*] in that extraordinary manner, *because Jesus was not yet glorified*; and it was the wise and gracious purpose of God to send him down on the church, after the ascension of Jesus, as a triumphant Conqueror, into his Father's presence. (See Eph. iv. 7—12. John xvi. 7. and Acts ii. 33.)

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

40 *Then many of the people, when they heard this* gracious *saying*, which was indeed a more free declaration and profession than he commonly made, *said, Surely this* [*man*] *is* at least *a prophet* [e], and probably comes to introduce the Messiah. And *others said*, Nay, *this is* certainly *the Messiah* himself: *but*, in opposition to this, *some* objected, and *said*, *shall the Messiah*, when he appears, *come out of Galilee*, as we know this Jesus of Nazareth does? *Hath not the scripture said*, expressly, *That the Messiah is to come from the seed of David? and* hath it not also added, that he is to arise *from the town of Bethlehem* Judah, *where David was* [*born*,] and which was the ancient seat of his family? (Compare Isa. xi. 1. and Mic. v. 2.) And *thus* they were divided in their sentiments, and *there was*

40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the prophet.

41 Others said, This is the Christ, But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?

42 Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?

43 So there was a division

which refer to the *effusion of the Spirit* by the Messiah under the similitude of *pouring out water*; and accordingly I have *paraphrased* the words in that view of the connection. See Isa. lii. 15; xliv. 3; lviii. 11; and Joel ii. 28.

c *Out of his belly*, or from within him.] The *belly* is frequently put for the *mind* or *heart*. Compare Job xv. 35; xx. 20; and Prov. xx. 27, 30.—It sometimes signifies, in a more general way, the *inward part* of a thing (1 Kings vii. 20; Mat. xii. 40), and may perhaps have some *allusion* here to the *prominency* of that capacious *golden vase* from which the *water* was now *poured out* in a large stream.

d *This he spake of the spirit.*] It is strange that, when the *evangelist* has thus plainly commented on these words of Christ, a late eminent writer should venture to advance a different interpretation, and explain them as spoken of the *doctrine of the gospel*.

e *Surely this man is a prophet.*] As the *article* is prefixed, it might seem natural to render it *the prophet*, were it not afterwards distinguished from *the Christ*. On this account I conclude that here, as also John i. 21. ὁ προφήτης, signifies only *a prophet*, that is, one of the ancient prophets revived. See *sect.* xx. *note* c, p. 119.

division among the people because of him.

was a warm *dissension* [f] *among the people on his account.* SECT. ci.

44 And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

And the officers also, who had been sent to apprehend him, were at a loss what they should do, *and some of them would have seized him; but,* struck with the regard which several of the people expressed towards him, and above all, impressed by the dignity and sweetness of his discourses, and the secret hand of heaven, which wrought for his deliverance, they were so far restrained, that *no man laid hands on him.* John VII. 44.

45 Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

Then the officers came back *to the chief priests and* the *Pharisees,* without accomplishing the purpose for which they were sent: *and* when the sanhedrim perceived they had not executed their commission, *they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him* with you as your prisoner, according to the orders you received from us? 45

46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

The officers replied, we could not find in our hearts to attempt it; for surely *no man* living *ever spake* in so engaging and irresistible a manner *as this man doth;* [g] and had you heard him yourselves it must have disarmed your resentment against him. 46

47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

Then the Pharisees, far from being softened by the account they gave them, *answered them* in a scornful and upbraiding way, What, *are you also deceived* by his artful and popular address? Surely you cannot be so weak as to be thus infatuated! 47

48 Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him?

Pray consider the conduct of those who are most capable of judging of this point: *have any of the rulers believed on him, or* [any] *of the Pharisees* of a more private station [h]? Yet 48

you

[f] *A warm dissension.*] So I apprehend the word Σχισμα always signifies. And thus the word *schism,* which is just the same with an English termination,) expresses, not merely nor necessarily *a separation* from each other, but an angry *debate,* whether it be or be not attended with *separation.*

[g] *No man ever spake as this man doth.*] *Plutarch* mentions it as a memorable proof of the extraordinary eloquence of Mark Antony, when Marius sent soldiers to kill him, that when he began παρατιθεσθαι τον θανατον, *to plead for his life,* he disarmed their resolution, and melted them into tears, (*Plutarch Vit.* p. 431.) But these *officers* are thus vanquished merely by hearing Christ's gracious discourses to the people, which is a circumstance much more remarkable. They return in a kind of *amaze,* and, instead of seizing him as their prisoner, or making a laboured apology for their failure, only break out into a pathetic exclamation, that *no man in the world ever spake like him.* It is a reflection which I hope we often make as we read his discourses.

[h] *Have any of the rulers believed on him, or* any *of the Pharisees?*] I cannot think, with Grotius, that this is any intimation that, if there were any of the *Great Council* who had favourable thoughts of Jesus, they were the Sadducees. The interpretation of the *paraphrase* is much easier. There is no reason to believe any of the Sadducees were inclined to receive the gospel; and if the Pharisees had secretly suspected them of such an inclination, they would hardly have affronted them by such an insinuation in this grand assembly, considering the *high rank* in which many of *that sect* were.

[i] *This*

SECT. CI.

John VII. 49.

you know these are most eminent for their acquaintance with religion, and are the most authentic interpreters of the sacred writings in which it is contained: *But this* wretched herd of *people, who* are so enchanted with him, *know* and regard *not* any thing of the true meaning of *the law*, and, it is easy to be seen, *are cursed* with a judicial blindness, and given up to the most absurd and fatal mistake[i].

49 But this people who knoweth not the law, are cursed.

50 Upon this, *Nicodemus*, whom we before have mentioned as the person *who came to* [*Jesus*] *by night*, (see John iii. 1. *& seq.* p. 141,) *being* both a ruler and a Pharisee, and sitting in the sanhedrim as *one of them*, took so much courage, that he *said to them*. *Doth our law* which you boast so much acquaintance with[k], *judge* and condemn *any man before* the magistrate appointed to execute *it* summon him into his presence, that he may *hear* from *him* what he hath to say in his own defence, *and know* from credible witnesses, *what he hath done* to deserve punishment? See Deut. xvii. 8—11. and xix. 15. *& seq.)*

50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night being one of them,)

51 Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doth?

52 But *they*, without entering farther into the argument, *answered him* only by *saying*, in a slight and superficial manner, What *art thou* thyself *also of Galilee*, that thou favourest the pretences of this contemptible Galilean? *Search* a little farther into the matter, *and* thou wilt soon *see* the unreasonableness of doing it; *for* it is notorious, even to a proverb, that *no prophet is raised up from Galilee*[l] nor will God ever honour that contemptible country with such a production. *And*

52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

[i] *This people who know not the law, are cursed.*] I see no ground to think, with Grotius, that this refers to Deut. xxvii. 26, and is built on a supposition that the *ignorance* of the *populace* must always expose them to *a curse*. It rather intimates an apprehension that God had given them up to a spirit of fatal *infatuation*.—Instances of their *contempt* of the *common people* may be seen in *Lightfoot, (Hor. Heb. in loc.)* and *Vitringa (Observ. Sacr.* lib. iii. cap. 2, p. 498.

[k] *Doth our law*, which you boast so much acquaintance with.] Soft as these words seem, there is a severe sting in them and they in effect amount to a charge, that while they professed such a knowledge of *the law*, and zeal for it, they either knew not, or regarded not, some of its plainest precepts, and were even unmindful of those which, as they were a *court of judicature*, were their peculiar concern.

[l] *No prophet is raised up from Galilee.*] As it is plain that Jonah, and probable that Nahum also, was a Galilean, Sir Norton Knatchbull, and others, who imagine that these rulers could not be ignorant of that, suppose that προφήτης here signifies the Great Prophet, or Messiah. But probably, had this been their meaning, they would rather have quoted the text which mentions Bethlehem as the *birth-place* of the Messiah. The answer must therefore be acknowledged to be very mean and trifling; and the abrupt manner in which the assembly was broke up, seems to intimate their consciousness that it would not bear examination.

53 And every man went unto his own house.

And, having said this, they would not wait for a reply, but immediately broke up the court; and so *every one went* away *to his own house.* SECT. CI. John VII. 53.

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH what delight and thankfulness should we hear this gracious *proclamation of Christ,* which he now made in the *temple,* and a while after repeated from the *throne* of his glory! *If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink;* yea, *whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely;* (Rev. xxii. 17.) Blessed *Jesus,* had we been allowed to have prescribed to thee a *form of words,* in which thy kind purposes towards us should have been expressed, what could we have invented more pathetic, more condescending, or more reviving!—May we *thirst* for the blessings of thy grace, and in the confidence of *faith* apply unto thee for them; and particularly for these communications of thy *Spirit,* which are so highly excellent and desirable, and indeed so necessary for us! Supply us with them, we entreat thee, in so rich an abundance, that we, in our different spheres, may supply others, and from us there may *flow rivers of living water!* Ver. 37, 39, 38

Well might such *gracious words* as these disarm the rage of enemies and persecutors. Let us add our testimony to theirs, and say, *Never man spake as Jesus speaks.* Let us hear him with calm and thankful attention, while his voice still sounds in his *word.* Happy are those *that know the joyful sound!* (Psal. lxxxix. 15.) The *Pharisees,* like *deaf adders, stopped their ears* against *the voice of the Charmer;* and, while they proudly censured the *populace* as a brutal herd, and gloried in their own superior wisdom, *rejected the counsel of God;* rashly judging without serious inquiry, and weakly borne down by vulgar senseless *prejudices* against *names* and *places,* which is all *the senate of Israel* opposes to the solid argument of *Nicodemus!* That good man, already considerably improved by his interview with *Jesus,* was undoubtedly confirmed in his adherence to him, by observing the methods of their opposition: and where magistrates arm their *authority* to overbear *argument,* they will probably, in the judgment of impartial men, produce a suspicion, at least, that they know their cause to be incapable of a rational defence. Ver. 46, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53

SECT. CII.

Christ, having spent the night in retirement, returns to the temple, where an adulteress is brought before him; but he avoids giving judgment in her case, and turns the consciences of his enemies on themselves. John VIII. 1—11.

JOHN VIII. 1.

SECT. cii.

THUS the Pharisees debated the case, *and* in such dissension their assembly broke up; but

John VIII. 1. *Jesus*, choosing to retire in the evening, that he might by secret converse with his heavenly Father, be animated to all the labours and dangers before him, *went* up *to* a mountain in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, which lay to the east of the city, on the other side of the brook Cedron, and is well known by the name of *the Mount of Olives*, where he spent the night in meditation and prayer.

JOHN VIII. 1.

JESUS went unto the mount of Olives.

2 *But*, that his retirement might not break in upon the opportunity of public service, which the present concourse of people gave him, *he returned to the temple early in the morning; and all the people* who *came to* worship there before they returned to their respective habitations in the country (the feast being now ended) flocked around *him* to receive his instructions; *and*, such was his courage and zeal, notwithstanding the late conspiracy which had been formed against him, that, *sitting down* in one of the cloisters, *he instructed them* as freely, as he had ever done.

2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple; and all the people came unto him, and he sat down and taught them.

3 *And*, while he was engaged in this exercise, *the scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman* who had just been *taken in* the commission of *adultery*[a], having been unhappily betrayed into it

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when

a *Brought to him a woman taken in adultery.*] It is well known that *this story* is wanting in the *Syriac version*, as well as in the Alexandrian and Bodleian copies, and indeed in most of the oldest *manuscripts*; which engaged Beza to question, and Le Clerc, with many others, to reject its authority. But I acquiesce in the reasoning of the learned Dr. Mill, to whom I refer the reader for the arguments to prove it *authentic*; the critical examination of these matters lying quite out of the sphere of my present design. A mistaken apprehension that some circumstances in the story were indecent, and an excessive rigour with respect to those who had fallen into this truly detestable crime, might perhaps be the occasion of this omission, if it was not accidental, in some early copies. Erasmus conjectures, it might be added by St. John after some copies of his gospel had been taken; and Grotius, that some, who heard the story from the *apostle's* mouth, recorded it with the approbation of Papias and other eminent persons in the church. The notice that *Eusebius (Eccles. Hist.* lib. iii. cap. *ult.) Jerom. (adv. Pelag.* lib. ii. cap. 6.) and other ancient writers

SECT. cii.

John VIII. 3.

when they had set her in the midst,

it among those intemperances, which too often attend public feasts; *and*, as the court of judicature, before whom she should have been tried, was not yet assembled, they took that opportunity of laying a snare for Jesus, by *setting her* before him, *in the midst* of the people who were attending his discourse. And, as if they were

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act;

4 desirous of information from him, *they* craftily *said unto him, Master*, as thou professest thyself an extraordinary Teacher, we desire thou wouldest pronounce thy judgment on *this* case; here is a *woman* who *was taken in the very act of adultery: Now Moses in the law has commanded us,*

5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

5 *that such* infamous *women should be stoned*[b], (Lev. xx. 10. and Deut. xx. 22.) but, as thou takest upon thee, either to supersede many of his precepts, or to interpret them in a very singular manner, we would be glad to hear thy determination in an affair of so great importance; *what therefore dost thou say? This they said tempt-*

6 This they said tempting him, that they might have to accuse him.—

6 *ing him, that*, which way soever he should determine, *they might have* an opportunity *to accuse him*; either to the Jewish rulers, if he acquitted such a criminal; or to the Romans, if he ventured, though on the authority of the law, to pronounce a capital sentence against her, which he had no authority from the Romans to do[c], and

writers have taken of the dubiousness of this passage, with a few other instances of the like nature, shews that critical exactness, with which they examined into the *genuineness* of the several parts of the *New Testament*, and so, on the whole, strengthens the *evidence of Christianity*, which (as I have shewn at large in the *ninth* of my *Ten Sermons*) is so inseparably connected with the genuineness and purity of the *New Testament*.

b *Such women should be stoned.*] If they spoke accurately, this must have been *a woman* who had been *betrothed to a husband*, and had been guilty of this infamous crime, before the marriage was completed; for such only are expressly condemned to be *stoned*. (Deut. xxii. 22—24.) The Jewish writers tell us, that when (as in the case of other *adulteries*) only *death in general* was denounced, without specifying the particular kind of it, *strangling* was to be used. Custom indeed (as Grotius observes) might have introduced *stoning* in all these cases (compare Ezek. xvi. 38, 40.) yet that would not justify what they here say. But *our Lord's* Spirit was too noble to take the advantage of such a slip, if it was a *mistake*: he had a much greater view, and silenced them in a far more effectual manner.

c *To accuse him*—to the Romans, if he ventured, &c.] It is very evident, that the *Jewish sanhedrim* sat *by licence* from the Roman governor; and though they had a right to try capital causes, it was necessary (as it seems from passages elsewhere examined) that the *sentence* they passed, should be *recognized* and *allowed* by the Romans before it could be carried into execution. (See *sect.* clxxxvi. *note* c, on Matt. xxvii. 2. and *sect.* clxxxviii. *note* h, on John xix. 10.) For Christ therefore to have undertaken the decision of this case would, *ipso facto*, have rendered him obnoxious to the Romans, as well as to the *sanhedrim*: and had he *condemned her*, a new occasion of offence must have arisen, in consequence of that—to Pilate, if execution had been ordered without an application to him,—and to the Jews, if Christ had directed such an application to be made. So that the snare here was much the same with that afterwards laid for him (Mat. xxii. 17—22. *sect.* cliv.) in the question about the lawfulness of *paying tribute*.

SECT. cii.

and which the Jewish rulers themselves had at present no power to execute. (Compare John xviii. 31.)

John VIII. 6. *But Jesus, stooping down, wrote* something *on the ground with his finger*[d], choosing (as it were) to speak to them by that action, rather than by 7 words. *But as they*, thinking that they had him at a great advantage, *continued asking him* with greater importunity, *he raised himself up, and*, without replying directly to their demand, only *said to them, Let him of you that is without sin*, in this or any other respect, pursue the prosecution, and *throw the first* fatal *stone at her*, when she is condemned[e]; (compare Deut. xvii. 7.) thus prudently avoiding a decision of the case, and leading them to reflect on their own 8 guilt. *And stooping down again, he wrote on the ground*, as he had done before, and left them to their own reflections.

9 *But having heard* [*his answer*], *and being* by a secret energy, which went along with the word of Jesus, in a very awful and powerful manner, *convicted in their consciences* of their own personal and aggravated guilt, *they* were ashamed even to look each other in the face; and so *went out one by one, beginning from the eldest*[f], whose age

—But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

7 So when they continued asking him, he lift up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard *it*, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the

d *Wrote on the ground with his finger*] The following words, μη προσποιουμενος, *as though he heard them not*, or (as I would render them) *as not regarding them*, are wanting in the most valuable *manuscripts*. Dr. Mill therefore, I think, justly omits them, as several other *printed editions* of the *Greek Testament* do. Were they admitted, they would cut off most of the *conjectures*, which learned men have advanced as to *what Christ wrote*; a question which it is impossible for us to determine, and which we have no need at all to be solicitous about. I am inclined to think, there was a language in the *action* itself, either to intimate that these hypocritical Pharisees should be themselves (as the prophet expresses it, Jer. xvii. 13.) *written in the earth*, or that they were to attend to what was *written*: but I can determine nothing, and must say with a great *critic* on these words, *Nescire velle, quæ magister optimus nescire nos vult, erudita inscitia est*: "To be willing to continue ignorant of what our great Master has thought fit to conceal, is no inconsiderable part of Christian learning."

e *Let him of you that is without sin, throw the first stone at her.*] Le Clerc makes the supposed impropriety of *this reply* a farther argument against the genuineness of this *text*: since *the law* did not require the *witnesses* or *executioners* to be *free from sin*, in order to the efficacy of such a prosecution. But it may be answered, that *our Lord's* certain knowledge of what the effect would be, vindicated the wisdom of his putting the matter upon this issue, by which it is plain in fact he escaped their snare.

f *Went out one by one, beginning from the eldest.*] It is strange any should have interpreted this clause so rigorously, as to imagine that every particular person went out just according to *his age*. It seems only to intimate that those *elders* of the people, who had been most eager in the prosecution, appeared under the most sensible confusion, and were some of *the first* that left the assembly. And in this view it is very remarkable; especially considering that they were now in the presence of the *multitude*, before whom they would, no doubt, be desirous to keep up the strictest appearance of virtue, in order to maintain their influence over them.—Though (as Dr. Whitby shews, on ver. 7.) *adultery* prevailed much among the Jews about this time,

the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

age and office tended to increase their shame and remorse; and the impression passed *even to the last*, or the youngest and meanest of them. *And Jesus was left alone* by all the accusers, *and the woman standing in the midst* of the crowd, with which he had been surrounded before she was brought in. SECT. cii. John VIII. 9.

10 When Jesus had lift up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

And Jesus raising himself up, and seeing none of those who had been soliciting his judgment, *but* only *the woman* they had brought before him, *said to her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Has no man condemned thee*, or is there none remaining to bear witness against thee? 10

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.

And she said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I take upon me, at this time, and under this circumstance, judicially to *condemn thee*, though thy crime has been undoubtedly great: *go thy way* therefore, without any impediment from me; but, as the Messenger of God, *and* Friend of souls, I warn thee, that thou *sin no more*[k]; for such enormous practices as these, must subject thee to a severer judgment from God, than man can pronounce or inflict. 11

IMPROVEMENT.

THE devout *retirements* of *Christ*, and his early renewed *labours*, so often come in view, that, after having made some progress in his history, we are ready to pass them over as things of course. But let us remember, that in some degree they call upon us *to go and do likewise*; and will another day condemn those, who, while they call themselves *his disciples*, are given up to ease and luxury, and suffer every little amusement or sensual gratification to lead them into an *omission* of their duty to God and their fellow-creatures; an *omission* especially aggravated in those, whom he has appointed to be *teachers* of others, and who have therefore so many peculiar errands to the throne of grace, and Ver. 1, 2

time, yet I see no reason to conclude, that their conscience convicted every one of them of this particular crime.—Their *partiality* (as *Dr. Lardner* well observes) seems to appear in bringing only *the woman*, not *the man*, when the law condemned both. (*Lard. Credib.* part i. Vol. I. p. 79.)

k *Sin no more.*] *Elsner* (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 318), and *Suicer*, (*Thesaur.* Vol. I. p. 205), have shewn that the word αμαρτανειν, *to sin*, is used by the most elegant *Greek classics* (as the correspondent word *peccare* is by the *Latin*) to signify *the commission of adultery*; which strongly intimates that even the *light of nature* taught many of the Heathens the exceeding *sinfulness* of it: which is the more worthy of notice, as not only the greatest of *their men*, but (according to their scandalous *theology*) the greatest of *their gods* too, gave it all the sanction it could have from example.

SECT. cii. and so many engagements *in the morning to sow*, or to prepare *the seed* of religious instruction, *and in the evening not to with-hold their hand* from dispensing it. (Eccles. xi. 6.)

John VIII. 3, 5 While *Jesus is teaching*, his *enemies* address him, not only as an *instructor*, but as a *judge:* and yet, by this specious form of 6 honour and respect, they sought only to *insnare* and *destroy him.* So unsafe would it be always to judge of men's intentions by the first appearances of their actions! But *our Lord*, in his answer, 7 united, as usual, the *wisdom of the serpent* with the *innocence* and 10, 11 gentleness *of the dove;* and in his conduct to *this criminal* shewed at once that tenderness and faithfulness, which might have the most effectual tendency to impress and reclaim her; if a heart capable of such infidelity and wickedness could be impressed and reclaimed at all. *Go thy way*, said he to this adulteress, *and sin no more.* Perhaps the charge may have little weight with such abandoned transgressors as she; but let all learn to improve their escapes from danger, and the continued exercise of Divine patience towards them, as an engagement to speedy and thorough reformation.

9 Let the *force of conscience*, and the *power of Christ* over it (both which so evidently appeared in this instance), teach us to reverence the dictates of our own minds, and to do nothing to bring them under a sense of guilt; which, through the secret energy of our *Redeemer*, wrought so powerfully on these *Pharisees*, that, hypocritical and vain glorious as they were, they could not command themselves so far as even to save appearances; but the *eldest* and *gravest* among them were *the first* to confess their guilt, by withdrawing from the presence of so holy a *Prophet*, from the *temple* of God, and from the *criminal* whom they came to prosecute. A like consciousness of being *ourselves to blame* will abate the boldness and freedom of our proceedings with *others* for their faults, if, while we *judge* them, we are *self-condemned;* nor will the authority of a superior *age* or *station* of life bear us out against these *inward reproaches.*

SECT. CIII.

Our Lord speaks of himself as the light of the world, urges the concurrent testimony of his Father, and gives the Jews repeated warning of the danger they would incur by persisting in their infidelity. John VIII. 12—29.

SECT. ciii. JOHN VIII. 12. JOHN VIII. 12.

John VIII. 12 *THEN Jesus*, after the interruption that he met with, while he was speaking to the people in the temple, by the Pharisees bringing in the

THEN spake Jesus again unto them, saying,

SECT. ciii.

John VIII. 12

saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

the adulteress, resumed the work he was before engaged in, and *again* proceeded to instruct the people; and observing the sun lately risen, and shining with great lustre and beauty, he *spake unto them, saying. I am the* true *light of the world*, in whose appearance you ought chiefly to rejoice[a]: this sun arises, in a few hours to descend again, and may fail many of you before your intended journey is dispatched[b]; whereas *he that follows me*, and governs himself by the dictates of my word and Spirit, *shall not* be left to *walk in* the *darkness* of ignorance, error and sin, *but shall have the light of life* continually shining upon him, to diffuse over his soul knowledge, holiness and joy, till he is guided by it to eternal happiness.

13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

13 Some of *the Pharisees therefore*, who were then present, but different persons from those who had brought in the woman, enraged at the late disappointment of their brethren, *said unto him, Thou bearest witness of thyself*, and therefore, by thine own confession (chap. v. 31.) *thy testimony is not* to be admitted as *true*, but may rather be suspected of vain-glory; nor can we believe such great things of thee, unless we have some farther proof than thine own affirmation.

14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, *yet* my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

14 *Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I* indeed *bear witness of myself*, [*yet*] as I speak from my own certain knowledge, and have already shewn that I am come with a Divine commission, *my testimony is* entirely and perfectly *true*, and as such you ought to admit it: *for I* well *know from whence I came, and whither I am going*, and the most evident demonstrations of it have been given you, both in the nature of my doctrine, and in the miracles which I have wrought among you; *but you* are so perverse, that, as often as I have hinted or declared it, you *know not* to this day *from whence I come, and whither I am going:* Which is not to be ascribed to the want of sufficient evidence, but merely to the force of your own prejudices; for *you*

15 Ye judge after the

[a] *I am the* true *light of the world.*] The Messiah was often represented under this view. Isa. xlii. 6. xlix. 6. and Mal iv. 2. Compare Luke ii. 32. John i. 4.—9. iii. 19. ix. 5. and xii. 46.

[b] The sun arises to descend again, and may fail many of you, &c.] The reader will remember this was the *morning* after the conclusion of the *feast of tabernacles*, and probably might be before the *morning sacrifice*: after which, no doubt, many would be setting out for their habitations in the country.

SECT. CIII.

you judge according to the maxims of *flesh* and sense, and will believe nothing in opposition to these principles, which you have so rashly imbibed[c], and by this means are justly liable to condemnation: but I wave that for the present, as *I* now *judge no man*, but rather appear under the character of a Saviour. (Compare chap. iii. 17.) *Yet if I* should *judge*, *my* determination and *sentence is* apparently *true* and right, and you would justly be condemned for not receiving my testimony; *for I am not alone* in what I say, *but I and the Father that sent me*, as we are in other respects inseparably united, do evidently concur together in the testimony that I give. *And it is written in your* own *law*, for which you profess so sacred a regard, *that the testimony of two men is* to be admitted as *true*, and matters of the greatest consequence are without scruple to be determined by it. Deut. xvii. 6, and xix. 15.) Now *I am* [*one*] *who bear* this *witness of myself*, in a fact, the truth of which I cannot but certainly know; *and the Father who sent me* is another, and surely a most credible Person, who also *bears* his *testimony to me*; thereby asserting the truth of every doctrine I teach, and the justice of every sentence I might pass.

John VIII. 15

15 the flesh, I judge no man.

16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

19 *Then said they to him*, *Where is* this *thy Father*, to whom thou so frequently appealest? mention him plainly, that we may know how far he is to be regarded, and produce him as a witness. *Jesus answered*, You may well ask; for it plainly appears by your conduct, that *you neither know me, nor my Father*, however you may boast an acquaintance with him: and indeed, *if you had known me* aright, and regarded me as you ought to have done, *you would also* long ere this *have known* who and what *my Father* is, in another manner than you now do; for I bear his complete resemblance, and it is my great business to reveal him to those who submit to my instructions.

19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

20 *These words Jesus spake* with the greatest freedom, *as he was teaching in the temple*, *in* a certain part of it called *the treasury*, where the chests

20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man

[c] *You judge according to the flesh*, &c.] The same *carnal prejudices* still prevail in the minds of the Jews, and prevent their reception of Christ; they laying it down as a first principle, that *he is to be a great temporal Prince and Deliverer.* And the admission of *false principles*, which are constantly taken for granted, and never examined, will, I fear, be attended with fatal consequences to thousands more.

man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come.

chests stood in which the people put their gifts for the service of that sacred house (see Mark xii. 41, sect. clix.) the stores of which were laid up in chambers over that cloister: and though he so plainly intimated that God was his Father, and charged the Jews with being ignorant of him, in whom they boasted as so peculiarly their God, *yet* their spirits were kept under such a powerful, though secret restraint, that *no one seized him;* which was the more wonderful, as it was a place from whence it would not have been easy to have escaped without a miracle, and which was much frequented by his greatest enemies: but the true reason was, *because his hour was not yet come* in which he was, by Divine permission, to be delivered into their hands.

SECT. CIII. John VIII. 20

21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

21 Confiding therefore in the protection of Divine Providence, *Jesus then said to them again*, as he had done before (chap. vii. 33, 34, p. 519.) *I am* speedily *going away* from among you, *and you shall seek me, and* enquire after the Messiah in vain; but, as a just punishment for your having rejected me, you *shall die in* this *your sin*, and perish for your unbelief by a singular stroke of Divine vengeance, which shall sink you into final condemnation. Remember then, that I have warned you with the greatest faithfulness, and now again I solemnly repeat the warning, That though you should be ever so desirous of admittance to me, it will be in vain; for *you cannot come* to the place, *whither I am* now *going*, either to molest me, or to secure yourselves.

22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

22 *The Jews then said*, with a very perverse and foolish contempt, What, *will he kill himself, that he says, You cannot come, whither I am going?* We shall not desire to follow him upon those terms.

23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world, I am not of this world.

23 *And he said to them* yet more plainly, So vile and malicious an insinuation as this, evidently shews that *you are from beneath*, the slaves of earth, and the heirs of hell; while, on the other hand, *I am from above*, and shall quickly return thither: *you are* originally *of this world*, and your treasure and hearts are here; but as *I am not of this world*, my thoughts therefore naturally turn to that celestial abode, from whence I came, and I incessantly labour to conduct men thither. But as to you I labour in vain: and *therefore I* just now *said unto you, that you shall die in your sins;* and it is really a great and

24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye

SECT. ciii.

awful truth, and deserves another kind of regard than you give it; so that I yet again would call you to consider it; *for if you believe not that*

John VIII. 24 *I am* [*he,*] whom I have represented myself to be[d], *you shall* unavoidably *die in your sins*, and are in effect the murderers of your own souls[e].

ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.

25 *Then said they to him*, in proud derision, *Who art thou*, that such great regard should be paid to thee, and that it should be so fatal a thing to neglect thee? *And Jesus said to them, Truly, because I am* still *speaking to you* to this very day

25 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even *the same* that I said unto you from the beginning.

26 in so plain and affectionate a manner, *I have many things to say and judge concerning you*[f], and justly might upbraid you with the utmost severity, and pass an immediate sentence of condemnation upon you: *but*, for the present, I content myself with reminding you, that *he who sent me is true; and*, as *I speak to the world* only *those things which I have heard from him*, he will finally verify my words, and it will be at the peril of your souls, if you continue to treat me with such perverseness and contempt.

26 I have many things to say, and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

27 These things were very intelligible, when compared with what he had said before; [*yet*] so exceeding stupid were they, and so blinded by

27 They understood not that he spake

d *That I am he, &c.* ὁτι εγω ειμι.] There is evidently an *ellipsis* here, to be supplied by comparing it with ver. 12. Compare John xiii. 19. Mark xiii. 6. and Acts xiii. 25.

e Are in effect the murderers of your own souls.] The repetition of the threatening here, from ver. 21. is a very awful rebuke to the folly of their answer, ver. 22. as if *our Lord* had said, "It very ill becomes you to trifle and amuse yourselves with such silly and spiteful turns, when your life, even the life of your souls, is at stake; and to talk of my *killing myself*, when by your unbelief and impenitency you are plunging yourselves into eternal death." Thus do those passages in *our Lord's* discourses, which to a careless reader might seem flat *tautologies*, appear, on an attentive review, to be animated with a most penetrating Spirit, and to be full of Divine dignity. A remark which will frequently occur, especially in reading those important discourses of Christ, which John has, through the infinite goodness of God to his church, recorded after they had been omitted by the other *evangelists*.

f *Truly, because I am* still *speaking to you, I have many things to say and judge concerning you.*] I entirely agree with the learned *Raphelius (Annot. ex Herod.* p. 292—303.) that all the difficulty of these words arises from a mistake in the *pointing*, as they stand in most *copies*; and I think his method of restoring the true reading and sense the easiest and justest I have ever met with. He would point them thus, Την αρχην, ὁτι και λαλω υμιν, πολλα εχω περι υμων λαλειν και κρινειν. All that know any thing of the *Greek* language, know that την αρχην often signifies *indeed*, or *truly*; and so the *translation* I have given is very *literal*, and makes a very good sense.—Mr. Fleming would render it, *I am, as I said unto you, The Beginning*, that is, the Person spoken of, Gen. i. 1. and elsewhere, under that title: but this, as well as our own *version*, is not any thing like a just and grammatical *translation*; though to be sure there is a sense in which Christ may most properly be called *the Beginning*. Compare Col i. 18. Rev. i. 8. xxi. 6. xxii. 13. (See *Fleming's Christology*, Vol. I. p. 281.)—I shall only add, that some would render it, *The same I am speaking to you of*: but the *version* here given is more agreeable to the *original*, and by a proper *pointing* would appear natural and easy, if what should be considered as *one sentence* had not been separated into two parts by a wrong *division* of the *verses*.

g *You*

spake to them of the Father.

by the prejudices of their minds, that *they did not understand that he spake to them of* God *the Father*, as the Person who sent him. SECT. ciii. John VIII. 28.

28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lift up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

Jesus therefore said to them, I know that, notwithstanding all I have said, you will be still so obstinate as to persist in your infidelity, till you proceed even to take away my life; but *when*, after all your professed desire of his appearance and kingdom, *you shall have lifted up* that glorious Person, *the Son of man*, from the earth, and have even proceeded so far as to put him to a violent death, instead of seeing his cause and interest overborne by that outrageous attempt, *you shall then know*, by some new and convincing tokens, *that I am* [*he*] [g], *and* [*that*] *I do nothing* separately *of myself, but*, in exact agreement with him, *speak* all *these things according as my Father has instructed me: And* even now *he that sent me is* graciously present *with me*, to bear his testimony to the truth of what I say, and to support and vindicate me: and whatsoever you may foolishly surmise, *the Father has not left me alone*, nor will he ever leave me; *for I always do the things which are* most *pleasing to him*, and faithfully and constantly pursue the important work, which he has committed to my trust.

29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone: for I do always those things that please him. 29

IMPROVEMENT.

SUCH may our character ever be, as we desire the supports of the Divine presence! Whoever be displeased, may we *always do the things which please him;* and with all diligence let us *labour, whether present* in the body, *or absent* from it, to be still approved and *accepted of him!* (2 Cor. v. 9.) 29

Our blessed *Redeemer* is *the light of the world.* With how much pleasure should we behold his rays! With how much cheerfulness should we *follow*, whithersoever he leads us; as well knowing that we shall not then *walk in darkness;* and God forbid, we should ever 12

[g] *You shall then know that I am he.*] This undoubtedly refers to the *prodigies* attending his death, his resurrection, and ascension, the descent of the Spirit, the amazing miracles wrought by the apostles in his name, &c.—But I am careful not to put such words into *our Lord's* mouth in the *paraphrase* as would have been unsuitable to the *reserve* which, on some of these heads, prudence obliged him to keep; or such as, in other instances, would have superseded farther inquiry into the meaning of what he said. I think it most natural to refer these to the *notes*, or to the *paraphrase* on some following passage.

SECT. ciii. ever choose to continue in it, as the shelter and screen of wicked works!

Ver. 17, 18 May we, with all candour and humility, regard and submit to *the testimony*, which *the Father has borne to him* in so express and incontestable a manner! Dreadful would be the consequence of

21, 24 our refusing to do it. The doom of these wretched *Jews* would be ours, *to die in our sins*. And oh, how insupportable will that guilty burden prove in a dying hour, and before the tribunal of God? How will it sink us into condemnation and despair! In vain shall those, who now despise him, then *seek* admittance to the world where he is: *thither they cannot come*; and if excluded from *him*, must be excluded from happiness.

25, 26 Justly might it long since have been our case: for surely he *has many things to say* of us, *and to judge concerning us*, should he *lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet*, after his having been *so long with us*, yea, after we have, as it were, seen him *lifted up* and *set forth* as *crucified among us*. (Gal. iii. 1.)

28 May this faithful *admonition* prevail to our conviction and reformation; that our everlasting condemnation may not farther illustrate the reasonableness, yea, the necessity of it, and the madness of hardening our hearts against it!

SECT. CIV.

Our Lord continues his discourse with the Jews in the treasury, the day after the feast of tabernacles; and labours to convince them how vain their pretences to liberty and to the privileges of the children of Abraham were, while they continued to reject and persecute him. John VIII. 30—47.

JOHN VIII. 30.

SECT. civ. THUS did Jesus warn the Jews of the danger of rejecting him, and appeal to his heavenly Father as authorizing the whole of his administration; and, *as he was speaking these words*, *many* of his hearers were so struck with them, that they *believed in him*[a], and were strongly inclined to follow him as the Messiah.

John VIII. 30.

JOHN VIII. 30.

AS he spake these words, many believed on him.

Then

a *Many believed in him.*] One can hardly think that the ambiguity of the expression of *the Son of man's being lifted up.* (ver. 28) engaged them to this, in hope that it might intimate some exaltation to a *temporal kingdom.* It is more reasonable to believe that they felt their hearts impressed with what they heard from him in the whole preceding discourse. Yet it is observable, that in the series of it he advances no new proof of his *mission:* so that probably these people were wrought upon by what they observed in the temper and conduct of Christ; bearing the perverseness of his enemies with so much patience, speaking of an ignominious and painful death with such holy composure, and expressing so genuine and lively a sense of his heavenly Father's approbation, and so sweet a complacency in it.—And, perhaps, would *ministers* generally allow themselves to open with freedom the native workings of a heart deeply impressed with the gospel, the secret charm might subdue those, whose subtlety and prejudice might be proof against the most conclusive abstract reasoning.

b *The*

SECT. civ.

John VIII. 31.

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;

Then Jesus, knowing the weakness and treachery of the human heart, and the difficulties which would lie in the way, if they attempted to put that inclination into practice, *said to those* of the *Jews who* were now ready to profess that they *believed in him*, *if you continue* stedfast *in* your adherence to *my word*, and yield a constant and universal obedience to it, [*then*] *you are my disciples indeed*, and I will finally own you as such.

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

And you shall then *know the truth* of my gospel in its full compass and extent, so far as it is necessary to your salvation, or conducive to your comfort; *and the truth shall make you free*[b], and fix you in that state of glorious liberty, which is the privilege of my disciples alone.

33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

But some that heard him were not a little displeased at this, as an insinuation that they were not already free; and strangely forgetting the servitude of Egypt and Babylon, and how often their nation had been conquered by others, and even how low it was at present reduced by the Roman power, *they* confidently *answered him*, *We are the seed of Abraham*, a person always free, and the peculiar favourite of heaven; *and* we *have never been in slavery to any man* whatever, nor do we fear that God will permit us to be so; *how* then *dost thou say* to us, *You shall be made free* upon becoming my disciples?

34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin.

Jesus, waving what he might easily have replied as to their former history, and the present state of their civil affairs, that he might give no unnecessary offence, *answered them*, *Verily*, *verily*, *I say unto you*, and recommend it to your consideration as a most important truth, *That every one who* habitually *practises sin*[c], and goes on in a course of it, *is the slave of sin*; and that is a servitude by far meaner and more dreadful

b *The truth shall make you free.*] According to *Sir Isaac Newton (on Proph.* p. 149) these words were spoken in a *sabbatical year*, when at the *feast of tabernacles*, which was just about the beginning of the *civil year*, great numbers of *servants* were *set at liberty*: and he supposes that the answer of the Jews (ver. 33) is to be explained with a peculiar reference to this, and contains two distinct thoughts: "*We* "*are Abraham's seed*, and consequently, "had we ever been in bondage, we should "have been set at liberty at this season, "though *Gentile slaves* are still detained; "*and*, besides that, *we never were in bond-* "*age to any man* at all." But the arguments by which this is fixed to a *sabbatical year* are dubious; and the words will make a good sense, independent on this peculiar interpretation; which yet seemed remarkable enough to deserve a mention here.

c *Who* habitually *practises sin.*] Ποιων την αμαρτιαν seems *a phrase* of the very same import with *working iniquity*: I have therefore rendered it *practises sin*, as that word generally signifies an habitual course of action.

d *The*

SECT. civ.

John VIII. 35.

dreadful than the yoke of an earthly tyrant. *Now*, as *the servant does not always abide in the family* of his master, but is at his lord's pleasure liable to be dismissed or transferred to another; much less can you, who are the servants, not of God, but of sin, promise yourselves that you shall still, on account of your descent from Abraham, continue in those privileges which, by undeserved mercy, you hitherto enjoy: [*but*] *the* eldest *son* and heir of the family continually *abides* in his father's house, and his power and
36 influence [*there*] are *always* increasing[d]. Thus do I ever continue, and have power of receiving whom I will into the family: *if therefore* I, who am *the* Only-begotten *Son* of God, and the Heir of all things, *make you free, you*, claiming in virtue of my right and authority, *will be free indeed*[e], and will not only be delivered from the bondage of corruption and the tyranny of Satan, but be entitled to those immunities and blessings here, and to that future inheritance of eternal glory, to which at present you have no claim.

35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the son abideth ever.

36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

37 And as to what you say, that you are Abraham's seed, *I know that you* indeed *are*, in a natural way, *the posterity of Abraham*[f], as Ishmael also was; *but* what can that avail you, while you are so unlike Abraham in your temper, and are so far from being of a disposition suitable to your descent from him, that *you* not only deride, but *seek to kill me, because my word has no place in* your hearts, and has not any weight or influence upon *you*, but is of a tenor directly contrary to
38 your prejudices and lusts. And, on the whole, there is so great a difference between us, that it is really impossible to reconcile your practice with my doctrine: for *I speak that which I have seen with my Father*, and which I know to be agreeable

37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye

d *The servant does not always abide in the family; but the son abides* [*there*] *always.*] I think *Dr. Guyse's* ingenious and pious *paraphrase* and *note* on these words contain an excellent illustration of them. The main sense of what he says on this passage is much the same with what I have given above (much as I had writ it several years ago): the casting out Ishmael, though a son of Abraham by the bondwoman, beautifully illustrates the remark and the connection.—It is strange that Dr. Claget should think that Moses was *the servant* here meant; and stranger yet that *Dr. Clarke* should adopt so unnatural an interpretation. See his *Sermons*, Vol. III. p. 4, 5.

e *If the Son make you free*, &c.] *Archbishop Tillotson.* (Vol. III. p. 578). thinks that this alludes to a custom in some of the cities of Greece, and elsewhere, whereby *the son* and heir had a liberty to adopt brethren, and give them the privileges of the family.

f *I know that you are the posterity of Abraham.*] It seems probable that *our Lord* speaks this, not to those who *believed in him*, but to some others in the company; and that the phrase, *They answered him*, ver. 33. only signifies that some of those who were present made such a reply.

ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

able to his mind and will; *and you do that which you have seen with your father*, and shew a visible conformity in your works to him: by which he intimated, that their works as much resembled the nature of the devil, as his doctrine answered to that of God.

SECT. civ.

John VIII. 38

39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father.—

But *they replied* with some warmth, *and said to him*, Take heed on whom this reflection may fall; for *Abraham is our father*, and surely thou wouldest not insinuate any thing to the injury of that holy patriarch's memory, who was expressly called the friend of God. 39

—Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

Jesus says to them, If you were indeed, and in the most important sense, *the children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham*, and would make it the great business of your life to imitate so wise and so holy an example.

40 But now ye seek to kill me, a Man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

But now you seek and contrive *to slay me, a* blameless and innocent *Man*, for no other reason, but because I am one *who has* faithfully *told you the truth, which I have heard* and received in commission *from God: Abraham*, your boasted ancestor, *did not* any thing like *this*; but gave the readiest credit, and the most joyful welcome, to all the messages which God sent him. Nevertheless, though you are so far from doing the works of Abraham, I may well say, as I have just now intimated (ver. 38.) that *you do the works of* him who is indeed *your father*. 40

41 Ye do the deeds of your father.—

—Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father *even* God.

Then said they to him, We would have thee to know that *we are not born of fornication*; we are not bastard Jews, whose blood has been contaminated with idolatrous alliances; but, by virtue of our descent from his people, and our profession of his religion, *we have* all *one* great and common *Father*, [*which is*] *God*. 41

42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth, and came from God; neither came

Jesus said to them, If God were indeed *your Father*, as you pretend, instead of attempting to take away my life, *you would* honour and *love me: for*, to speak without any reserve on this important head, I renew the declaration, That *I proceeded* originally, *and do come from God*[s], and appear 42

[s] *I proceeded* originally, *and do come from God.*] This seems to be the proper distinction between εξηλθον and ηκω. The *seventy* (as several *commentators* have observed) use *the first* of these words to express the descent of children from their parents; (compare Gen. xv. 4. xxxv. 11. and Isa. xi. 1.) The form in which *the other* stands, favours the rendering I have given (*do come from God*), and may intimate not only his *first mission*, but his exact *attendance* to every particular message.

[h] Is

SECT. civ.

appear among you as his Messenger; *for I came not of myself, but He has sent me,* and I constantly keep his commission in view. And *why do you not understand* this *my language,* and acknowledge it, simple as it is, to be indeed divine? [*Is it*] *because you cannot hear my word*[h]? Can you pretend to say that I decline giving you the most public and frequent instructions, or that those instructions are unintelligible and obscure? Your consciences in general know the contrary as to the main series of them.

came I of myself, but he sent me.

John VIII. 43

43 Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word.

44 The case indeed is sufficiently plain, nor do I fear to represent it in the most express terms: I tell you therefore, *You are* the genuine children *of your father the devil*[i]; *and the* malicious and abominable *lusts of* that accursed spirit, whom I justly call *your father, you will* resolutely and obstinately persist to *do*[k]: and even now there is the plainest evidence of your resemblance to him, in your design to murder me, and in your opposition to the truth that I deliver to you; for *he* has always acted as the enemy of mankind, and *was a murderer from the beginning,* in his attempt to bring destruction on the world by sin: (compare 1 John iii. 8.) And to accomplish his destructive purpose, as his original integrity was lost by his apostacy from God, he threw off all regard to what was right, *and continued not in the truth,* but, by an audacious and most pernicious lie, ruined the first parents of the human race, *because there* was and *is no truth in him:* and, indeed, *when he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own,* and indulges the bias of his own fraudulent and perfidious nature; *for he is* himself *a liar, and* was *the father of it,* or the first forger of that

44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 detestable and pernicious crime. And, as you are of such a disposition, if I would flatter your prejudices and vices, you would hear me with pleasure; *but because I* plainly and faithfully *speak*

45 And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not.

h Is it *because you cannot hear my word?*] I choose to place *a mark of interrogation* after this clause, Οτι ου δυνασθε ακουειν του λογου του εμου; and δυνασθε ακουειν may refer either to their opportunity of *hearing,* which is the most common sense of the word, or to their capacity of *understanding:* I have therefore included both.—The word γινωσκειν, in the preceding clause, evidently signifies *to understand,* Acts viii. 30. and *to distinguish,* John x. 14.

i *You are of your father the devil.*] The account *Josephus* gives of the wickedness of the Jews about this time abundantly vindicates this assertion of *our Lord* from any appearance of undue severity. See *Joseph. Bell. Jud.* lib. v. cap. 10 (al. vi. 11), § 5. cap. 13 (al. 16), § 6. *Edit. Havercamp.* and *Dr. Lardner's Credibility,* part i. book i. chap. 6. Vol. I. p. 304—310.

k *You will* resolutely and obstinately persist to *do.*] This is plainly the sense of the words, θελετε ποιειν. See *note* a on John i. 43. p. 126.

speak the truth, without desire of favour, or fear of offence, *yea*, being under the influence of this false spirit, *do not believe me*. If you take upon you to deny this, and accuse me of falsehood and prevarication in any degree, how will you prove your charge? *Which of you convinces me of* that, or any other *sin? But*, on the other hand *if* it be evident, that *I speak the truth*, *why do ye not believe me? He that is of God*, or that is really a child of God, and a partaker of his Spirit, *hears*, with an affectionate and obedient regard, *the words of God*, his heavenly Father, and receives them with reverence, by whomsoever they are brought: the reason *therefore*, why *you do not hear* mine, is *because*, as I have often said, *you are not* the children *of God*.

46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

47 He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

47

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY we approve ourselves the sincere *disciples of Jesus*, by *continuing in his word*, and being *faithful* even *unto death*, as ever we expect *a crown of life!* (Rev. ii. 10.) Without this, external privileges will turn to but little account. The *children of Abraham* may be the *children of Satan;* and they are so, if they imitate the temper and works of the accursed *fiend*, rather than of the holy *patriarch*. *The devil was from the beginning a liar, and a murderer;* and all falsehood and malice are from him. Let us earnestly pray, that we may be freed from them, and from the tyranny of every other sin, to which we have been enslaved; that *Christ, the Son*, may *make us free* of his Father's family, and of his heavenly kingdom! Then we *shall be free indeed*, and no more be reduced to *bondage*.

Ver. 31, 37, 38, 44, 36

May we prove that we are *the children of God* by our readiness to *hear* and receive *the words* of our blessed *Redeemer*, the words of incarnate truth, and wisdom, and love; whom none of his enemies could ever *convict of sin*, nor ever accused him of it, but to their own confusion! May we resemble him in the innocence and holiness of his life; that we may the more easily and gracefully imitate that courage and zeal, with which he reproved the haughtiest sinners, and bore his testimony against the errors and vices of that degenerate age and nation in which he lived!

47, 46

SECT. CV.

Jesus promising immortality to his followers, and speaking of his own existence as prior to that of Abraham, the Jews in the temple attempt to stone him; but he miraculously escapes from their hands. John VIII. 48, *to the end.*

JOHN VIII. 48.

SECT. CV.

John VIII. 48

NOW when *the Jews* heard Jesus so expressly declaring that they were ignorant of God, and were the children, not of Abraham, but of the devil, they *answered* him *therefore* with great rage and contempt, *and said unto him, Do we not well say, that thou*, who speakest of Israelites in such language as this, *art a Samaritan*, rather than one of the holy seed, *and art possessed by a demon*, who hurries thee on to such outrage and madness [a].

JOHN VIII. 48. THEN answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

49 But to this insolent charge, *Jesus* meekly *answered*, It is plain, from the whole series of my discourses and actions, *that I am not a demoniack* nor can any of you produce any thing in all that I have said or done which looks like lunacy or impiety; *but* the truth is, *I honour my Father*, by bearing a steady and consistent testimony to the doctrine he sent me to reveal to the world; *and*, because this is contrary to your corrupt prejudices and passions, therefore *you dishonour me* by such opprobrious reflections, to hope of discrediting my message.

49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

50 *But* as for what personally relates to me I am little affected with it; for *I seek not my own glory*; nevertheless, I know *there is one that seeketh*, and will secure it, *and* who now *judgeth* of all that passes, and will at length evidently shew the exact notice he has taken of it, to my honour and to your confusion.

50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

51 For God will not only finally glorify me, but will confer the highest honours and rewards on all my faithful servants! and therefore, *verily, verily, I say unto you, If any one keep my word, he shall never see death* [b], but shall assuredly be entitled

51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying he shall never see death.

[a] *Possessed by a demon*, who hurries thee on to such outrage and madness.] See noted on John vii. 20. and x. xix.

[b] *He shall never see death.*] The turn given to this expression in the *paraphrase* accounts, not only for this passage, and that in John xi. 26. (*infra* cxi.) but for what is said of *Christ's having abolished death* (2 Tim. i. 10.) having *destroyed the devil* (Heb. ii. 14.) and *raised up* Christians *with himself, and made them sit with him in heavenly places.* (Eph. ii. 6.)—*Death* is as nothing, compared to what it would otherwise have been to the sinner: and true felicity or heaven is so sure and so near, that, by an easy and common *figure*, true *Christians* are spoken of as *already there*, see the following *note*. [c] Ye

SECT. CV.

John VIII. 51

entitled to eternal life, and shall immediately be advanced to so glorious and happy a state, that the dissolution of this mortal nature shall, with respect to him, hardly deserve to be called death.

Then said the into him, Now now that thou devil. Abra- dead, and the ts; and thou If a man keep ying, he shall aste of death.

52 *Then the Jews*, thinking he had asserted that his disciples should be exempted from the common lot of mortality, *said* again *to him* in a reproachful way, *Now we* assuredly *know that thou hast a demon* dwelling in thee, which hurries thee on to this madness and pride, otherwise thou couldest never talk at this extravagant rate: for *Abraham*, the friend of God, and the great founder of our nation, *is dead: and* all *the* holy *prophets*, whom God raised up in succeeding ages, were so far from being able to bestow immortality on their followers, that even they themselves are long since dead; and *yet thou* presumptuously *sayest, If any one keep my word, he shall never taste of death* [c]. What, *art thou* 53 *greater than* that venerable patriarch *our father Abraham, who is dead, and* than all *the* most illustrious *prophets*, who *are* also *dead? Whom dost thou* then *pretend thyself to be*, that thou shouldest thus assume such a distinguishing glory to thyself?

Art thou greater ur father Abra- which is dead? e prophets are whom makest yself?

esus answered, honour myself, nour is nothing: ny Father that eth me, of whom , that he is your

54 *Jesus replied, If I* only *glorify myself*, by high encomiums on my own dignity and excellence, while I neglect the honour and service of my Father, *my glory is nothing* but a mere empty sound; [*but*] it evidently appears by all the series of my converse and miracles, compared with each other, that *it is my Father* himself *that* effectually *glorifies me*, even he, *of whom you* confidently *say, that he is your God*, though in this respect you pay so little regard to his testimony: And notwithstanding all your boasts, *yet* 55 nevertheless *you have not* truly *known him; but I* well *know him: and if I should* deny it, and *say that I know him not*, or retract my pretensions

Yet ye have not him, but I him: and if I should

[c] *If thou sayest, If any one keep my word he shall never taste of death.*] This is the phrase which *our Lord* used, though perhaps its signification is equivalent. But I think it shews improper it would be to interpret the ing words, Θανατον ου μη θεωρηση εις τον αιωνα, *He shall not see death for ever*; cy signified, He shall not die eter- for on this interpretation of the words there could have been no shadow of force in the argument they use, unless they had meant to assert that *Abraham and the prophets were dead, εις τον αιωνα, for ever*: than which nothing could be farther from the thoughts of any of the Jews, except the Sadducees, who do not seem to have been the persons speaking here. See *note* 1 on John iv. 14. p. 163.

SECT. CV.

faith, giving glory to God: (Rom. iv. 20.) Though not only *Abraham* and *the prophets*, but *Peter* and *Paul*, and the other *apostles, are dead*, yet this word shall be gloriously accomplished. John VIII. 52 Still *they live* to him, and shortly shall they be for ever recovered from the power of the grave: so that *death* is to them comparatively as nothing. With them may our final portion be, and we may set light by the reproaches, clamours, and accusations of prejudiced, ignorant and sinful men!

Adored be that gracious Providence that determined our existence to begin in *that* happy *day* which *prophets* and *patriarchs* 56 *desired to see*, and in the distant view of which *Abraham rejoiced!*

Let it be also *our joy;* for *Jesus Christ* is *the same yesterday, to-*58 *day, and for ever:* nor could *the heart* of those holy men fully *conceive those things, which God had prepared for them that love him*, and which *he has* now *revealed unto us by his Spirit.* (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

SECT. CVI.

The seventy disciples return with joy: Christ foretells the greater success of his gospel, and praises his heavenly Father for the wise, though mysterious dispensation of it. Luke X. 17—24.

SECT. CVI.

Luke X. 17.

LUKE X. 17.

AFTER these things, Jesus determined to take his last, and, as it seems, his most successful circuit through Galilee [a]; *and*, before he set out upon it, *the seventy* disciples, who had been sent before him as his harbingers (sect. xcvii. p. 504, *returned* to him *again* [b] *with* great *joy*, attended with some mixture of surprise, *saying, Lord*, we have not only cured diseases, according to the power thou wast pleased to give us (ver. 9, p. 506), but, though thy commission did not directly express so much, yet it appears that *even the demons* themselves *are subject*

LUKE X. 17.

AND the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

a His last circuit through Galilee.] St. Luke has given us a large account of several occurrences in it, omitted by all the other *evangelists;* and I think there can be no doubt but it must come in here. It was dispatched between the *feast of tabernacles* and the *dedication* (mentioned John x. 22, *sect.* cxxxiv), or between the months of September and December.—I call it his *last circuit* through Galilee, because it is strongly intimated, that after the conclusion of it, he returned thither no more before his crucifixion. (See Luke xiii. 31—35, and John x. 40—42.—Quickly after his resurrection, which was the next spring, we find *five hundred brethren* in Galilee. (1 Cor. xv. 6.) It is probable most of them might be converted in this journey; for we never find him attended by greater multitudes, nor his enemies more alarmed, than about this time.

b *The seventy* disciples *returned* to him *again.*] I presume not to determine where or when they met him; but considering they were by the law obliged to attend *the feast* at Jerusalem, it seems most probable that was the time and place.

c *I saw*

SECT. CVI.

subject to us, when *in thy name* we command them to go out of such as they had possessed.

18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

And he said to them, I know that it is and must be so: for *I* myself *saw Satan*, the great prince of the demons, *falling like lightning from heaven* on his first transgression, and well remember, how immediate and dreadful his ruin was [c]; and I foresee, in spirit, that renewed, swift and irresistible victory, of which this present success of yours is an earnest, which the preaching of the gospel shall shortly gain over all these rebel powers, which even in their highest strength and glory were so incapable of opposing the arm of God. And, that you may more successfully pursue this conquest, *behold*, *I* now *give you* a miraculous *power*, securely *to tread upon serpents and scorpions*, those venomous and hurtful creatures (compare Mark xvi. 18, and Acts xxviii. 5), in token of your triumph over the infernal spirits, *and over all the might of* Satan *the* great *enemy*, which he may set in array against you; *and* I will so effectually support you in all the trials you shall meet with, that *nothing shall by any means* be able to *injure you*, while you continue faithful in your adherence to my service. (Compare Psal. xci. 13, and Gen. iii. 15).

Luke X. 18.

19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

19

20 Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you: but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Nevertheless, *rejoice not* so much *in this*, *that the* evil *spirits are* thus *subject to you*, and that you are enabled miraculously to controul them; *but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven*, and that you stand enrolled among the heirs of that glorious world, as the peculiar objects of the Divine favour and love.

20

21 In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and

In that remarkable *hour*, *Jesus*, in a pleasing contemplation of the success that should attend his gospel, though it was to be propagated by such weak instruments, exceedingly *rejoiced in* his *spirit*, *and said* in the words he had used on a former occasion [d] (Mat. xi. 25, 26, p. 311), *I ascribe glory to thee*, *O* Almighty *Father*, the Creator and *Lord* both *of heaven and earth*, *that*

21

[c] *I saw Satan*, &c.] I think this answer to the *several* loses much of its beauty and propriety, unless we suppose *Satan* to have been the prince of the *demons* they spoke of, and also allow the reference hinted at in the *paraphrase* to the *first fall* of that rebellious spirit. Compare 2 Pet. ii. 4, and Jude, ver. 6.—For the remainder of *this section*, and some of the *following*, the reader may consult the *notes* in the parallel passages referred to, which have been considered in their proper places above.

[d] *And said* in the words he had used on a former occasion.] They are here repeated with evident propriety, in the view of that glorious success which should attend these his despised servants, as the destined conquerors of the infernal legions, by whom thousands of *the poor* should be brought to *receive the gospel*.

SECT. CVI.

Luke X. 21.

that while *thou hast hid these things from the wise* philosophers *and prudent* politicians of the age, thou hast discovered them in the mean time to others of an inferior character, *and hast* graciously *revealed them to* the weak, the ignorant, and the poor, who are but as *infants* in the eyes of the world, and in their own apprehension: *be it so, O Father!* I cheerfully acquiesce in it, *since such is thy* sovereign, wise, and holy *pleasure*, to humble human pride, and to display the glory of thy name.

and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

22 Then likewise did Jesus repeat the declaration of his own extensive authority, and said (as before, p. 311), *All things* in the kingdom of Providence and grace *are delivered to me by my Father; and no one* perfectly *knows, who the Son is, except the Father; nor who the Father is, except the Son, and he to whom the Son will* be pleased to *reveal* [*him*:] so that from me you must learn the saving knowledge of God, and the way to secure his favour.

22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal *him*.

23 *And* then, *turning to his disciples, he said* [*to them*] *apart, Blessed are the eyes which* do, or hereafter shall, *see the things that you see*; and (I may add) the ears which do, or hereafter shall hear the things that you daily and familiarly hear. In the midst of all your poverty, fatigue and danger, you have reason to think yourselves exceeding happy: *for I say unto you*, and very solemnly assure you of it, *That many* of the most eminent *prophets* of the Old Testament dispensation, *and* even of the most pious and illustrious *kings*, whom God raised up to reign over his people, *desired* earnestly *to have seen the things which you see, and did not see them; and to have heard the things which you hear, and did not hear them*: remember then, how much you are indebted to the Divine goodness, and let it be your care to make a suitable improvement of them. (Compare Mat. xiii. 16, 17, p. 343.)

23 And he turned him unto *his* disciples, and said privately, Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things that ye see:

24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

IMPROVEMENT.

Verses 23, 24

21

AND are not *our obligations* in some measure proportionable to *theirs*, while these glorious sights are reflected to *our eyes* from the mirror of his word, and these glad tidings are echoed back *to our ears!* Have not *we* also reason to adore the peculiar favour of God to us, and to admire the *sovereignty* of his love, that he has

has been pleased to *reveal his Son* in us, and has given to such *babes*, as we must own ourselves to be, that spiritual knowledge of him, which he has suffered to remain *hidden* from the great, the learned, and the wise! *Even so, Father*, must we also say, *for so it seemed good in thy sight:* thou *hast mercy on whom thou wilt have mercy*, and often exaltest the riches of thy grace by the meanness and unworthiness of those, on whom it is bestowed. SECT. CVI. Luke X. 21.

Have we reason to hope that our worthless *names* are *written in heaven?* let us often think of that glorious society, amongst whom we are enrolled as members, and *rejoice* in the thought of those privileges, which result from such a relation to it: *privileges*, in comparison of which, a power to *heal diseases*, and *eject demons* with a word, would hardly deserve our *joy*. In a grateful sense of them, let us adore the grace which gave us a place in the *Lamb's book of life*, and be ever solicitous to behave in a manner worthy of so illustrious a hope. 20

We have great encouragement to expect that he, before whom *Satan fell like lightning from heaven*, will enable us finally to *trample on his power*. Let us not servilely fear that condemned criminal, already marked with the scars of the Divine vengeance; but let us cheerfully hope, that the triumph over him will be renewed by the preaching of the gospel. Quickened by that hope, let us more earnestly pray, that the ruin of his gloomy kingdom may be daily more and more apparent, especially among us; that our gracious *Redeemer*, who reckons the interest of souls his own, may have renewed reason of *joy* and *praise* on that account. Exert, O blessed *Jesus*, thine own almighty arm for that great purpose; and, as *thou alone* canst do it, *reveal thine heavenly Father* to those who, by neglecting *thee*, shew that they *know not him!* 18, 19 21 22

SECT. CVII.

Christ answers the scribe, who asked what he should do to inherit eternal life; and illustrates his answer by the parable of the good Samaritan. Luke X. 25—37.

Luke X. 25.

AND behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Luke X. 25.

WHILE our Lord was discoursing in this manner with his seventy disciples, an assembly of people gathered round them; *and behold*, among the rest, *a certain* man who was a *lawyer*, or one of those scribes who made it their profession to study and teach the law of Moses, and to resolve many curious questions relating SECT. CVII. Luke X. 25.

SECT. cvii.

Luke X. 25.

relating to it, *rose up* with a design *to try him*[a]; *and*, to judge of the skill of Jesus in divine matters, *said*, O thou great *Master* and Teacher in Israel, *what must I do that I may inherit* that *eternal life* which thou so frequently professest as the main object of our pursuits, and which is indeed most worthy of them?

26 *And* Jesus, as *he* knew with what design he had proposed the question, wisely returned it on himself, and *said to him*, *What is written in the law*, which thy profession must engage thee to have made thy study? *how dost thou* find the case to be determined there? and what is it thou dost so frequently *read* there[b]?

26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 *And he replying, said*, It is there written as the sum of all the commandments (Deut. vi. 5. Lev. xix. 18), "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thine understanding*; thou shalt unite all the faculties of thy soul to render him the most intelligent and sincere, the most affectionate and resolute service[c]; *and* thou shalt also love *thy neighbour* as sincerely and impartially *as* thou lovest *thyself*."

27 And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28 Jesus readily approved his answer; but was desirous to convince him at the same time how far he was from coming up to what the law required: *and*, in this view, *he said to him*, *Thou hast answered right: do this, and thou shalt live*: do it perfectly, and thou wilt have a legal claim to

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

a With a design *to try him.*] Dr. *Barrow* concludes, it was with an intent to *insnare him*; the question being so determined by the *Jewish doctors*, that for a different answer he might have been accused of *heresy*; (see *Barrow's Works*, Vol. I. p. 221): but I see no certain proof of so bad an intention.

b *How dost thou* so frequently *read* there?] *Vitringa* with great pertinency observes, that what the *scribe* replies, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*, &c. was *daily read* in their synagogues, which made the answer more apparently proper. (*Vitringa, Synag.* p. 1060.) And that this passage of scripture is still *read* by the whole assembly, both in their *morning* and *evening prayers*, and is called, from the first word of it, the *Shemah*, may be seen in *Prideaux's Ceremonies of the modern Jews*, p. 49 and 115; only it is observable they leave out that clause, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. See *Wotton's Mischn.* Vol. I. p. 171—174.

c Thou shalt unite all the faculties of thy soul, &c.] I apprehend, with Archbishop Tillotson, we may acquiesce in this *general sense* of the passage, without being solicitous to seek a particular *distinct idea* to each of the words used here. Otherwise I should think καρδία, *the heart*, a general expression, illustrated by the three following words; ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ, (ἐν ὅλῃ...) that is, with the warmest affections: *and with all thy strength*, (ἰσχύϊ;) that is, with the most vigorous resolution of the will; *and with all thine understanding*, (διανοίᾳ;) that is, taking care to form rational ideas of him, as a guide to the affections and resolutions. Accordingly we may observe that, in a parallel place (Mark xii. 33), the word σύνεσις is used instead of διανοία. And this very word is justly translated *Understanding*, Eph. i. 18; iv. 18; and 1 John v. 20.

d Passing

to life; or cultivate this temper sincerely, and God will not leave thee finally to perish, but will give thee all necessary discoveries of his will in order to thine eternal salvation.

Luke

But he, willing to himself, said Jesus, And who neighbour?

But he, willing to justify himself as to the integrity of his inquiry, and to display the virtue of his character, not at all doubting but he sufficiently understood his duty to God, *said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour*, whom by this latter precept I am obliged to love? for I would fain know the whole of my duty, that I may practise it in all its extent. X. 29.

And Jesus an- ig, said, A cer- ian went down Jerusalem to Je- and fell among s, which stripped his raiment, and led *him*, and de- , leaving *him* ad.

And Jesus replying, spake the following parable, which was intended to shew, in the most lively manner, that every human creature, who needs our assistance, is to be considered by us as our neighbour, of whatever nation, or faith, or profession he may be: and he *said, A certain man* of our own country *went down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and*, passing through those wild deserts and dangerous roads [d], he *fell among* some of those cruel *robbers who* so often assault such as travel that way: and these ruffians, *having both* plundered, *stripped*, and bound him, *and* having also *wounded him* in a cruel and dangerous manner [e], *went off, leaving him half dead. And it happened, that* while he was in these deplorable circumstances, *a certain priest went down that way*, who was going to Jericho, where so many of that profession were settled [f]; *and* though by virtue of his sacred office he ought to have been a peculiar example of humanity to the afflicted, yet *seeing him* lie at some little distance, and being willing to avoid the trouble or expence which a more particular inquiry might have occasioned, *he crossed* [*the road*,] *and went on*, proceeding in his journey without any farther notice. *And in like manner* too, *a Levite* going that way, *when he was at the place*, just *came* 30 31 32

And by chance came down a priest that way; ien he saw him, ssed by on the ide.

And likewise a , when he was at

ssing through those wild deserts and ous roads.] This circumstance is well ; for so many robberies and mur- ere committed on *this road*, which ough a kind of *wilderness*, that Je- lls us it was called הדמים, the *ay*.—Jericho is said to have been n a valley, and thence is the phrase *g down* to it.

ounded him in a cruel and danger- nner.] This is strongly implied expression, πληγας επιθεντες, *having wounds*.

f Where so many of that profession were settled. See *Lightfoot's Hor. Heb. in loc.* where he produces a passage from a considerable *Jewish writer* to prove that *twelve thousand priests* and *Levites* dwelt at *Jericho*; which, if it had any shadow and degree of truth, vindicates the *paraphrase*, and shews how naturally *the priest* and *Levites* were here introduced, without any reflection on their office.

g *Came*

SECT. cvii.

Luke X. 33.

came and looked on this miserable object[g], *and* immediately *crossed and passed by*, without doing any thing at all for his relief. And thus the distressed creature might have lain and perished, *but* for *a certain Samaritan*[h], who, *as he was travelling* the same way, *came* to the place *where he was, and seeing him* in this sad condition, though he might easily know, or at least guess him to be a Jew, yet, notwithstanding the general hatred of these two nations to each other[i], he *was moved with* very tender *compassion* to-

34 wards him: *And going to him, he bound up his wounds* in the best manner he could[k], *when*, as the only means he had to cure them, *he had poured in* some of the *oil and wine* which he had taken with him as a part of the provisions for his journey (compare Gen. xxviii. 18.) *and setting him on his own beast*, because he was incapable of walking, *he* held him up as he rode, and with the tenderest care *brought him* safely *to an inn*, where he had some acquaintance; *and* there *took* farther *care of him*, that he should be lodged and accommodated in a proper manner that night.

35 *And the next morning, as he departed* from the inn, *he took out* of his purse *two* denarii, or Roman *pence*[l], *and gave them to the landlord* of the house; *and* at the same time *said to him, Take* all possible *care of* this poor wounded stranger, and

at the place, came and looked on *him*, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*.

34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him;

g *Came and looked on* this miserable object.] This is the import of ἐλθων και ἰδων, as *Raphelius* has shewn in his *Notes from Xenophon*, p. 91.

h *A certain Samaritan.*] It is admirably well judged to represent the *distress* on the side of the Jew, and the *mercy* on that of the Samaritan; for self-interest would make them see how amiable such a conduct was, and lay them open to *our Lord's* inference, ver. 37. Had it been put the other way, prejudices might more easily have interposed, before the heart could have been struck with these tender circumstances.

i Notwithstanding the hatred of these two nations to each other.] See *note g* on John iv. 9, sect. xxix. p. 162.—Some writers tell us this hatred arose so high, that if a Jew and a Samaritan met in a narrow way, they were exceedingly solicitous that they might pass without touching each other, for fear of pollution on each side. If this was fact, it is a beautiful illustration of the humanity of this *good Samaritan*, who would not only touch this Jew, but took so much pains to *dress his wounds*, and *to set him on his own beast*, supporting him in his arms as he rode, as well as making such generous *provision for him* at the inn.

k *Bound up his wounds*, &c.] As the Jew was *stripped* by the robbers, ver. 30, we may probably suppose the Samaritan used some of *his own garments* for this purpose; which was a farther instance of wonderful goodness, perhaps tearing them to make a more convenient *bandage*.—Of the use the ancients made of *wine* and *oil*, in dressing fresh wounds, see *Bos. Exerc.* p. 24. and *Wolfius* on this text.

l *Two* denarii, or Roman *pence*.] These were in value about *fifteen pence* of our money. It is a very probable circumstance that a man travelling without any attendants, and now going out to a considerable distance from home, should not have *more to spare*, especially as he was to travel through so dangerous a road; and so it would have been very imprudent to charge himself with much more money than he was like to want in his journey; which would be *the less*, as it was usual for travellers in those parts to *carry their provision* with them. Compare Gen. xxviii. 18, and Josh. ix. 12, 13.

him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

and let *him* want for nothing; *and whatsoever more thou shalt spend* on his account, *I will repay thee as I come back.* SECT. cvii. Luke X. 36.

Now, said our Lord to the lawyer he was discoursing with, *which of these three* persons, the priest, the Levite, or the compassionate Samaritan, *dost thou think was the neighbour of this* poor *man that fell among the robbers? And he said*, Undoubtedly it was *he that had mercy upon him*, notwithstanding he was a person of another nation and religion. *Then said Jesus to him*, If this seem so amiable an example to thee, *go, and do thou likewise*; and if thou findest even a Samaritan in the like distress, consider him as thy neighbour, and as cheerfully perform all these beneficent and friendly offices to him: for those pretensions to religion are but vain, which do not inspire men with such universal humanity and benevolence. 37

IMPROVEMENT.

Of how great importance is it, that we should every one of us be in good earnest making this inquiry, which the *scribe* addressed to *our Lord, What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life!* What ought we not willingly to do, and to bear, that we may secure so great a felicity? Still will *our Lord* answer us from his word, that we must *keep the commands of God*, while we are looking to *him* as *the end of the law for righteousness*; (Rom. x. 4.) Happy are they that faithfully *do it*, that through the grace manifested in the gospel *they may have a right to eat of the tree of life!* (Rev. xxii. 14.) Ver. 25 26

May this abstract and summary of the commandments be *written*, as it were in golden characters, *on the table* of each of *our hearts!* May we *love the Lord our God with all* the united powers and faculties of *our souls*, and *our neighbour as* sincerely and fervently as *ourselves!* And may we learn, from this beautiful *parable* of the *good Samaritan*, to exercise our charity to our fellow-creatures in the most amiable manner! 27

The *Jewish Priest* and *Levite* had, no doubt, the ingenuity to find out some excuse or other for *passing over to the other side*; and might, perhaps, formally thank God for their own deliverance, while they left *their brother* to bleed to death for want of their assistance. Is it not an emblem of many living characters, perhaps of some, whose *sacred office* lays them under the strongest obligations to distinguished benevolence and generosity? But the *good Samaritan* acted the part of *a brother* to this expiring *Jew*. 31, 32 33

O seed

SECT. CVII. *O seed of Israel, O house of Levi* and of *Aaron!* will not the day come, when the humane virtues of *heathens* shall *rise up in judgment* against thee!

Luke X. 34, 35 Let us reflect with shame, what are the *differences* between one *Christian* and another, when compared with those between a *Samaritan* and a *Jew!* Yet here the *benevolence* of a good heart overcame even these; and, on the view of a wounded dying man, forgot that he was by nation *an enemy*. Whose *heart* does not *burn within him*, whose *eyes* do not overflow with *tears of delight*, 37 while he reads such a story? Let us *go and do likewise*, regarding every man as *our neighbour* who needs our assistance. Let us exclude every malignant sentiment of *bigotry* and *party zeal* which would contract our hearts into an insensibility for all the human race, but a little select number, whose sentiments and practices are so much our own, that our love to them is but *self-love* reflected. With an honest openness of mind let us always remember the *relation* between man and man, and feel and cultivate that happy *instinct* by which God, who has *formed our hearts* in many instances *alike*, has in the original constitution of our nature strongly and graciously bound them to each other.

SECT. CVIII.

Christ visits his friends at Bethany, and commends the diligence, with which Mary attends his preaching, while her sister Martha was too anxious about the entertainment of her guests. Luke X. 38, *to the end.*

LUKE X. 38.

SECT. CVIII. ABOUT this time[a] our Lord quitted Jerusalem, and set out with his disciples on his last journey from thence to Galilee, the feast of tabernacles (as was observed above) being fully concluded. *Now it came to pass, as they were on their journey, he entered*, with many of his attendants, *into a certain* neighbouring *village*, called Bethany, (compare John xi. 1, sect. cxxxix.) *and a certain* pious *woman, whose name was Martha*, with the most cheerful hospitality *received him into her house*, thinking herself greatly honoured by such a visit.

Luke X. 38.

LUKE X. 38.

NOW it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house.

39 *And she had a sister called Mary, who*, being earnestly desirous to improve this happy opportunity

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which

a About this time.] I express myself in this indeterminate manner as to the date of this little, but very instructive story, because I apprehend the *evangelist* has not exactly determined when it happened, which it was of no importance for us exactly to know. It might very possibly be just at this time; at least, the want of any sufficient reason for transposing it, obliges me, on the *rules* I have laid down to myself, to introduce it here.

b *Sat*

which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

tunity of advancing in divine knowledge and a religious temper, *sat down at the feet of Jesus*, as an humble disciple[b]; *and heard* with most diligent and pleasing attention *his* wise and gracious *discourse*, which, as his usual practice was, he began as soon as he came in to address to those that were about him.

SECT. cviii.

Luke X. 39.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

But Martha, too solicitous about the variety and elegance of the entertainment she intended for her sacred Guest and the company with him, *was* exceedingly *hurried*[c] and perplexed *about much serving; and coming in* to the room where Jesus was, *she*, not without some warmth and discontent, expressed how much she was offended at her sister's sitting still, and *said, Lord, dost thou not mind that my sister has left me to* provide and *serve* up the entertainment *alone*, which is more than I can well manage; while she sits here as calmly as if she had no concern in it? I would not take upon me to call her away from thy presence myself; but I beg that thou wouldest interpose in the matter; *speak to her therefore, that she may lend her helping hand with mine*[d], and let her then sit down to hear thee discourse when the entertainment is over. 40

41 And Jesus answered, and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

And Jesus in reply said to her, O *Martha, Martha, thou art* over *anxious and disturbed* with restless agitation of spirit[e] *about many things* which are not worth so much solicitude, and might well have been spared on such an occasion as this: *But* let me tell thee, my dear friend, that *there is one thing* absolutely *necessary*[f], and of 41

42 But one thing is needful. And Mary

42

[b] *Sat down at the feet of Jesus*, as an humble disciple.] It is well known that this was the posture in which *learners* attended on their *teachers* (compare Luke viii. 35, and Acts xxii. 3), and likewise grew into a *proverb* for humble and diligent attention. See the *authors* cited by *Wolfius in loc.* and especially *Vitringa, Synag.* lib. i. part 2, cap. 6.

[c] *Was* exceedingly *hurried.*] The word περισπᾶτο properly signifies *to be drawn* (as it were) *different ways* at the same time and admirably expresses the situation of a mind surrounded with so many objects of care that it hardly knows which to attend to first. She had probably *servants* to whom she might have committed these affairs; and the humility and moderation of our blessed *Redeemer* would have taken up with what had been less exactly prepared; especially as she had so valuable and so signal an opportunity of improving her mind in divine knowledge.

[d] *Lend her helping hand with mine.*] This is the exact import of συναντιλαβέσθαι, which is also with the utmost propriety used for the *assistance* which the *Spirit of God* gives to the infirmities of our frail nature. Rom. viii. 26.

[e] *Disturbed* with restless agitation of spirit.] The word τυρβάζη is no where else used in the *New Testament*. It seems to express the *restless situation* of a person in a *tumultuous crowd*, where so many are pressing upon him that he can hardly stand his ground; or of *water* in great *agitation*.

[f] *There is one thing* absolutely *necessary*: ενος δε εστι χρεια.] This is one of the gravest and most important *apothegms* that ever was uttered: and one can scarce pardon the frigid impertinence of Theophylact and Basil, who explain it as if he only meant, *One dish of meat is enough.*

SECT. cviii.

Luke X. 42.

of infinitely greater importance than any of these domestic and secular cares; even the care to have the soul instructed in the saving knowledge of the way that leads to eternal life, and to secure a title to it: *and Mary* is wisely attending to that; therefore, instead of reproving her, I must rather declare, that she *has chosen* what may eminently be called *the good part*[g], *which*, as it *shall not be* finally *taken away from her*, I would not now hinder her from pursuing; but rather invite thee to join with her in her attention to it, though the circumstances of our intended meal should not be so exactly adjusted, as thy fond friendship could desire.

ry hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

IMPROVEMENT.

38, 39 So steadily and zealously did *our blessed Lord* pursue his work, with such unwearied diligence and constant affection! No sooner is he *entered into the house* of this pious friend, but he sets himself to preach the word of salvation, and is the same in the *parlour* which he had been in the *temple*. O *Mary*, how delightful was thy situation! Who would not rather have *sat* with thee *at the feet of Jesus*, to *hear his wisdom*, then have filled *the throne* of the greatest prince upon earth! *Blessed* were *thine eyes* in what they saw, *thine ears* in what they heard, and *thine heart* in what it received and embraced, and treasured up as *food*, which would *endure to everlasting life!*

40 How unhappily was her good *sister* deprived of the entertainment of these golden moments, while *hurried* about meats and drinks, and tables with their furniture, till she lost, not only her *opportunity*, but her *temper* too; as it is indeed hard to preserve it, without a resolute guard, amidst the crowd and clamour of domestic cares! Happy that *mistress* of a numerous family, who can manage its concerns with the meekness and composure of *wisdom*, and adjust its affairs in such a manner, as that it may not exclude the pleasures of *devotion*, and cut her off from the means of religious improvement! Happy the *man* who, in a pressing variety of secular business, is not so *cumbered* and *careful* as to forget

g *The good part.*] That μερις signifies *a portion* there can be no reasonable doubt; but that here is any *allusion* to the custom of sending *the best portion* of an entertainment to a guest to whom peculiar honour was intended, seems too great a refinement, and not exactly suitable to the occasion; though some considerable *critics* have defended it. (See *Wolfius, in loc.* and *Elsner, Observ.* Vol. I. p. 225, 226.) I think, rendering την αγαθην μερίδα, *the good part*, is more forcible, as well as more literal than our *translation*; as it intimates nothing else to deserve the name of *a good part*, when compared with this. Compare Mat. xix. 17, sect. cxxxvii.

forget that *one thing*, which is absolutely *needful;* but resolutely chooses *this better part*, and retains it as the only secure and everlasting treasure! Oh that this comprehensive and important sentence were ever before our eyes! Oh that it were inscribed deep upon our hearts! *One thing is needful.* And what is this *one thing*, but the care of the soul? what, but an humble attention to the voice and the gospel of *Christ?* Yet, as if *this* were of all things the most unnecessary, for what poor trifling *care* is it not commonly forgot? yea, to what worthless *vanity* is it not daily sacrificed?

SECT. CVIII. Luke X. 41, 42.

Let the *ministers of Christ*, let the friends of souls in every station, exert themselves, that all about them may be awakened duly to regard this great interest; accounting it *their meat* and *their drink* to promote it. Let them be always solicitous, that neither they nor others may neglect it for the hurries of too busy a life, or even for the services of an over-officious friendship.

SECT. CIX.

Christ being entreated by his disciples to teach them to pray, repeats, with some additions, the instructions and encouragements relating to that duty which he had formerly given in his sermon on the mount. Luke XI. 1—13.

Luke XI. 1.

AND it came to pass, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

Luke XI. 1.

OUR Lord then leaving Bethany, went on his way; dividing his time, as usual, between the care of teaching his numerous followers and the exercises of secret devotion. *And as he was* one day *praying in a certain* retired *place, when he had ended, one of his disciples said to him, Lord,* we desire thou wouldest *teach us to pray,* and give us some short form which may be proper for our frequent use, *as John also taught his disciples*[a], and other leading men of the several religious sects among us have taught theirs.

SECT. CIX. Luke XI. 1.

2 And he said unto

And he said to them, When you pray, you may use

[a] *As John also taught his disciples.*] Many learned men suppose that the *Jewish masters* used to give their followers some short *form of prayer*, as a peculiar badge of their relation to them. This John the Baptist had probably done, though we know not now what it was. And in this view only can we suppose the *disciples* could now ask Jesus to *teach them to pray;* for it is not to be thought, that, in the *three* preceding *years* of his ministry, he had not often given them instructions both as to the *matter* and *manner* of *prayer*. In this sense *Mr. Joseph Mede* and *Dr. Lightfoot* understand *the request* and *answer* before us; and I have never met with any thing upon it, which has given me more satisfaction. See *Mede's Works*, p. 1, 2, and *Lightfoot's Hor. Heb. in loc.*

▸ O God

SECT. CIX.

use that form, which I before have given as a comprehensive model and directory for prayer (see Mat. vi. 9—13, p. 221, 222), and *say* in your addresses to God, "O God of the spirits of all flesh[b], who dwellest in the high and holy place, with humble reverence we bow before thee, and with a filial confidence in thy mercy, and mutual love unto each other, we would look up to thee as *our* God and *Father*, *who* with the most amazing grace and condescension *art* ready to attend unto the supplications of thy children from thy throne *in heaven*: we adore thee as possessed of infinite perfections; and as our first concern is for thy glory, we offer it as our first request, *May thy name be* every where *sanctified*; may thy perfections be displayed through all the world, and be regarded with the highest veneration! And, that the honour of thy Majesty may be thus exalted, *May thy kingdom come* which thou hast promised to establish under the Messiah; may thy victorious grace be universally triumphant over all thine enemies, and thy people be willing in the day of thy power! And, as an evidence of its efficacy on the hearts of men, *May thy* holy *will be done, as* it is constantly *in heaven, so likewise upon earth*; and be as cheerfully submitted to, as fully acquiesced in, and readily obeyed in all things, as it is possible for us, in this imperfect state, to imitate those heavenly spirits, who delight in doing thy commandments, and hearkening to the voice of thy word!

Luke XI. 2. to them, when ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name: thy kingdom come: thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth:

3 During our continuance here on earth we would not be solicitous to seek great things for ourselves, but humbly beg that thou wouldest *give us day by day our daily bread*, and wouldest supply us, as our wants return upon us, with such a competent provision of the necessaries of life, as may enable us to serve thee acceptably, and to attend without distraction and uneasiness to the performance of our duty. *And*, though the guilt of our iniquities might justly separate between thee and us, and with-hold good things from us, we earnestly entreat thee to extend thy mercy to us, and to *forgive*

3 Give us day by day our daily bread:

4 And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive

[b] O God, &c.] I think it but justice to the reverend Mr. Godwin to let the reader know that *this paraphrase* on the 2d, 3d, and 4th *verses* was written by him. I had here only given *a translation*, having *paraphrased* this excellent *prayer* before in Vol. I. sect. xl. the *notes* on which may be consulted here.

[c] *Who*

forgive every one that is indebted to us: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

give us all *our sins; for even we,* the bowels of whose mercy cannot be compared with thine, are willing to *forgive every one that is indebted to us,* and desire to pardon all that have injured us: *and,* to prevent us for the time to come from falling into sin, *bring us not into* circumstances, that will expose us to the danger of *temptation,* nor suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear; *but* keep us by thy grace from all iniquity, and *rescue us from* the power of *the evil one,* that he may never triumph in our fall, and we may finally be saved from all the ruinous effects of sin."

SECT. CIX.

Luke XI. 4.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

And when he thus had taught them what they were to pray for, in order to excite and encourage them to a believing importunity in prayer, *he said to them, Who* is there *of you,* that has not observed the efficacy of importunate requests[c]? If, for instance, he *shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight,* and knock at his door, *and say to him. Friend,* I desire thou wouldest *lend me three loaves;* 5

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him:

For a friend of mine, 6 who was benighted *on his journey, is* just *come to my house, and,* being altogether unprovided, *I have nothing to set before him* for his refreshment:

7 And he from within shall answer, and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

And he from within, instead of granting his request immediately, *shall* at first be unwilling to do it, and *answer* him, *and say, Do not disturb me* at so late an hour; for *the door is now shut* and fastened, *and my children are with me in bed* and asleep; so that *I cannot rise to give thee* what thou askest. 7

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

Yet if he still go on to press him, that he would consider his necessity and comply with his request, *I tell you, Though he would not rise and give him* the loaves that he desired, *because he was his* neighbour and *friend, yet on account of his importunity,* as he continues knocking, and will take no denial, *he will* at length *get up and give him as many as he wants.* 8

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be

Now then, if one who was at first unwilling to regard his friend was overcome at last by his continued earnestness, and yielded to his importunity, much more will God, who is infinitely good and rich in mercy, though he may not see fit to answer you immediately, be certainly prevailed 9

[c] *Who* is there *of you* that has not observed the efficacy of importunate requests?] The words in the *original* do not make a complete grammatical sentence: but such accidental inaccuracies are sometimes to be found in the most approved authors. The sense is not the less plain.

SECT. CIX.

vailed upon at length to give you what you stand in need of, if you continue to be earnest and importunate in your prayers to him: *and I say* therefore *to you*, Whatever mercy you desire to obtain, *ask* it of God with a continued fervency, *and it shall* assuredly *be given you: seek* it with diligence, *and you shall find* it; and if it be a while delayed, *knock* with an earnest importunity at the door of Divine mercy, *and it shall* at length *be opened to you.* And the success of others may encourage you to this, as what indeed has been confirmed by happy and constant experience: *for every one that asks*, with an unwearied fervency, *receives; and he that* diligently *seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocks* again and again, though for a while there may be some delay, *it shall* at length *be opened.* (Compare Mat. vii. 7, 8. sect. xlii.)

Luke xi. 9. be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

11 *And*, further to assist your faith on these occasions, reflect upon the workings of your own hearts towards your offspring, and consider, *What father is there among you, who, if a son* of his *shall ask* him *for bread, will give him a stone? or if* [*he ask*] him *for a fish, instead of a fish will give him a serpent? Or if he ask* him *for an egg, will* be so unnatural as to *give him a scorpion?* and, in the room of what is necessary for the support of life, will offer him a thing that would be useless or injurious to him? *If you then, who are*, at least comparatively, *evil*, and perhaps some of you inclined to a penurious and morose temper, yet *know how to give good gifts to your children*, and find your hearts disposed to relieve their returning necessities by a variety of daily provisions; *how much more shall* [*your*] *heavenly Father*, who is infinitely powerful and gracious, and who himself has wrought these dispositions in you, be ready to bestow every necessary good, and even to *give the* best and the most excellent gift of all, his *Holy Spirit, to them that* sincerely and earnestly *ask him* for it; to produce and cherish in their hearts those graces which may fit them for the services of life, and for the joys of an happy immortality? (Compare Mat. vii. 9, 10, 11. p. 233.)

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

IMPROVEMENT.

WELL does this petition become every *disciple of Christ; Lord, teach us to pray!* Thou hast taught us by thine example, and by the precepts of thy word; teach us also by thine Holy Spirit!

Excellent

Excellent is this *form of sound* and Divine words, which our great Master here recommends. God forbid, that any of his followers should censure their brethren, who think it still proper to use it, not only as a *directory*, but as a form too, though perhaps with some little variation from the *original sense* of some clauses of it[d]. Let us attentively study it, that, concise and expressive as it is, our thoughts may go along with its several *petitions*. SECT. CIX. Luke XI. 1.

Let us learn to reverence and love *God*, and to consider ourselves as *brethren* in his family. Let the glory of *his name*, and the prosperity of *his kingdom*, be much dearer to us than any separate interest of our own. Let it be our cordial desire that *his will* may be universally obeyed, and with the most entire consent of soul acquiesced in, by all his creatures, both *in heaven* and *on earth*. Let our appetites and passions be so moderated, that *having* even the plainest *food and raiment we may be therewith content:* and, on the other hand, how plentiful soever our circumstances may be, let us remember, that *day by day* we depend on God for our *daily bread*. Nor do we need even the most necessary supplies of life more than we need *daily pardon;* to which therefore we should be putting in our constant claim, heartily *forgiving all our brethren*, as we desire to be *forgiven by God*. Conscious of our own weakness, let us, as far as we can, endeavour to avoid circumstances of *temptation;* and when necessarily led into them, let us be looking up to heaven for support; labouring above all things to preserve our integrity, and to maintain a *conscience void of offence*. 2, 3, 4

Depending on the certainty of these gracious *promises*, and encouraged by the *experience* of so many thousands, who have on *asking received*, and on *seeking found*, let us renew our importunate addresses to the throne of Divine grace: and, remembering the *compassion* of our *heavenly Father*, let us be emboldened, in the *full assurance of faith*, to ask every necessary blessing, especially the communication of that enlightening and sanctifying *Spirit*, without which our corrupt hearts will find out a ready way to abuse the choicest of his providential favours to the dishonour of his holy name, and the deeper wounding of our own miserable souls. 9, 10

SECT.

[d] With some little variation from the *original sense*, &c.] Dr. Guyse has excellently shewn in his *note* on Mat. vi. 13. that *this prayer* in its original sense was peculiarly suited to the dispensation then present, as introductory to the *Messiah's kingdom*, and has given a just and very expressive *paraphrase* of it in that particular view. But there is not a clause in it, which will not bear a more extensive sense, and express what ought to be our daily temper, and the breathings of our heart before God. No doubt, thousands of Christians have daily refreshment and edification in the use of it; and it is astonishing that any should venture to condemn their brethren for it. But I would hope there are few of any profession now remaining, who have so much of the spirit of opposition and censoriousness.

SECT. CX.

Our Lord dining at the house of a Pharisee, seriously admonishes him and his brethren of their guilt and danger; by which they are exasperated, rather than reformed. Luke XI. 37, *to the end.*

SECT. CX.

Luke XI. 37.

LUKE XI. 37.

NOW, after our Lord had delivered these things, it happened one day, that *while he was speaking* to the people about the great concerns of their eternal salvation [a], *a certain Pharisee* then present *invited him to dine with him; and*, with whatever view he might do it, Jesus, that *he* might not seem morose, or insensible of a civility, accepting the offer, *went in* to his house, *and sat down to table.*

LUKE XI. 37.

AND as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat.

38 *And when the Pharisee* who had invited him *saw that he* was regardless of the tradition of the elders, and *did not first wash before dinner*, according to the constant custom of their sect, *he wondered* [*at it*], considering the character he had for an extraordinary degree of sanctity.

38 And when the Pharisee saw *it*, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

39 *But the Lord*, perceiving his thoughts, and knowing that in some circumstances a faithful reproof is the most valuable token of friendship and gratitude, *said to him*, As I see you are *now* offended at my neglecting the ceremony of washing before dinner, I cannot but plainly tell you, that *you Pharisees* are too much like those vain people that *cleanse* only *the outside of the cup and the dish*, *while* the inside, which is of much greater importance, is left dirty and foul; for with regard to many of you, *your inward part*, even your very heart and conscience, *is* defiled being *full of rapine*, *and* of all the foulest kinds

39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter: but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

40 of pollution and *wickedness*. But let me seriously

40 Ye fools, did not he

[a] It happened one day, that *while he was speaking*, &c.] The attentive reader will easily observe that I have here omitted what occurs from the end of the 13th to the beginning of the 37th *verse*. That passage is inserted, *sect.* lxi—lxiv. as being exactly parallel to Mat. xii. 22, & *seq.* and Mark iii. 22, & *seq.* Nor could I see any proof that the same discourse, with just the very same circumstances, happened again here; and as this seemed improbable, in proportion to the variety and resemblance of those circumstances, I thought it was better thus to transpose Luke's story, than to take the repetition for granted.—The phrase εν δε τω λαλησαι, *while he was speaking*, will, I think, fairly admit the turn I have given it in the *paraphrase*; but if any judge otherwise, it will be easy to turn back to the passage as inserted before, p. 528, & *seq.* and all I have said above to introduce the *section* before us will be true on that supposition.

[b] O ye

he that made that which is without, make that which is within also?

ously ask you, *O* ye *thoughtless creatures*[b], and let me charge you that ye ask yourselves, *Did not he that made the outside, make also that which is within?* Did not the same God that created the body, create the soul too? and must he not intimately know his own work, and discern and abhor all those secret abominations, which, in contempt of his omniscience, you study so artfully to conceal from your fellow-creatures? (Compare Psal. xciv. 8, 9.)

SECT. CX.

Luke XI. 40.

41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have: and behold, all things are clean unto you.

I would therefore, from the sincerest concern for your true honour and happiness, exhort you not only to purge yourselves from secret wickedness, *but* to abound in the exercise of universal goodness, and particularly to *give alms* with liberality *in proportion to your substance*[c]; *and* then, if it be done from a right principle, *behold*, God, the great Proprietor of all, will accept and bless you; and though you should not be so exact in this outward washing, *all things are pure to you*, so that you may use them with comfort; whereas now you do, as it were, pollute and profane every thing you touch, and all the water in the world cannot wash away the stain. (See Tit. i. 15.)

41

42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgments, and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not

But alas, you seem little disposed to attend to this kind and faithful advice; and therefore my character obliges me solemnly to warn you of those approaching judgments, which, if speedy repentance does not prevent, will shortly overtake your whole sect, numerous and honoured as it is. *Woe* therefore *unto you, Pharisees! for*, to gain the admiration of the priests and the people

42

[b] *O ye thoughtless creatures.*] Ας ἄφρονες; is a milder word than μωροι, I chose to render it thus, rather than as in our *translation*; (see *note* m on Mat. v. 22. p. 208.) The learned *Elsner. (Observ.* Vol. I. p. 227.) explains the latter part of the *verse* as if it had been said, "*There is a great deal of difference between cleaning the outside, and cleaning that which is within*, and no such necessary connection between them as you seem to suppose." To justify this, he urges 2 Sam. xix. 24. and one passage in Aristophanes, where πλυνω signifies to *cleanse*; but the sense is so unusual, and that commonly received, so much more lively and important, that I could not persuade myself to deviate from *our translation* here.

[c] *In proportion to your substance.*] Thus Grotius understands it. The learned *Bos* (*Exercit.* p. 26) has, I think, abundantly proved the words τα ενοντα (for καλα τα ενοντα) will very justly admit *this sense*, and are thus used by some of the best *Greek classics*. No other seems to agree so well with the *connection*; not even that ingenious turn of *Raphelius*, (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 93—96,) who explains τα ενοντα by το ενδον της πομπης και της παρασκευης, Mat. xxiii. 26. or *that which is within the cup and dish*, as if it had been said, "Give meat to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty, and make a liberal distribution of *those things that are within the cup and the dish.*" But the last view in which το ενδον had been mentioned was as expressing *the temper of the heart*, (ver. 40,) which is a strong objection against this great man's interpretation.

SECT. CX.

people, *you* most scrupulously *pay the tithe of mint, and rue, and every* [*other*] trifling *herb* that grows in your gardens, and expect to recommend yourselves to the Divine acceptance by such kind of observances; *but*, at the same time, you shamefully *pass by* and carelessly neglect the practice of righteous *judgment* to your fellow-creatures, *and* of *the love of God* your Creator, as if they were matters of but little importance; whereas indeed *these* are the duties that *you* more especially *ought to have done; and* yet I own, you ought *not to neglect the other*, as even the least of God's commands are to be revered and obeyed. (See Mat. v. 19.)

not to leave the other undone.

Luke XI. 42.

43 *Woe unto you, Pharisees*, on account of your pride, which appears on every occasion, and in every affair of life! *for you love the uppermost seats* in all assemblies, even *in the* very *synagogues*, where you meet to humble yourselves before God: *and* mightily affect *salutations in the markets* and other public places, by titles of distinguished respect, as the guides and fathers of the people, the oracles of truth, and the standards of holiness. (Compare Mat. xxiii. 6—10. sect. clvii.)

43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

44 *Woe unto you* also, *O* ye *scribes and Pharisees*, on account of your deceit, as under all those appearances of the strictest sanctity you are the most egregious *hypocrites* of the age [d]! *for* I may truly say that *you are like concealed graves*,[e] *which*, being overgrown with grass, *men walk over, and are not aware of* [*them*], till they stumble at them, and are hurt, or at least defiled by the touch of them.

44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over *them* are not aware *of them.*

45 *And one of the doctors of the law*[f], who happened

45 Then answered one

[d] *O* ye *scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.*] Though some *copies* want these words, and Grotius and Dr. Mill give them up, I think *Dr. Whitby* is right in retaining them; especially because they so much illustrate verse 45. See *Whitb. Exam. Mill.* p. 46.

[e] *Are like concealed graves.*] The discourse against the Pharisees, which is recorded Mat. xxiii. *sect.* clvii. clviii.) was plainly delivered at another time, and in very different circumstances. *Our Lord* there compares them to *whited sepulchres*, ver. 27. adorned on the outside, but defiled within; but here to *graves overgrown with grass*, which might often happen to be by the *way-side*, (compare Gen. xxxv. 19.) and so might occasion such accidents as are here referred to.

[f] *One of the doctors of the law.*] I apprehend that νομικὸς may well be rendered *a doctor* or *interpreter of the law:* which I generally choose, rather than the word *lawyer*, because that naturally suggests *to us* a modern idea of an office which did not exist among the Jews at this time, and has strangely misled some interpreters. These *Jewish lawyers* (as *our translation* calls them) were the most considerable species of *scribes*, who applied themselves peculiarly to study and explain the *law*. Probably many of them were Pharisees; but it was no ways essential to their office that they should be so. What touched the person here speaking was, that *our Lord* in his last *woe*, ver. 44. had joined the *scribes* with the *Pharisees*.

f the lawyers, aid unto him, r, thus saying, reproachest us

pened to be present, observing that in this last woe Jesus mentioned the scribes, who were a body of men to whom he and his brethren belonged, *answered and said unto him, Master,* in *saying these things, thou reproachest* not only the sect of the Pharisees, but *us too,* in a manner unbecoming the dignity of our holy profession, as the depositaries of the sacred oracles.

SECT. CX.

Luke XI. 45.

And he said, nto you also, ye rs! for ye lade with burdens us to be borne, ye yourselves not the burdens one of your fin-

But Jesus was so far from palliating the matter to ingratiate himself with them, that *he* plainly and courageously *said,* Nay, it is a righteous rebuke, and I intend it for you, and therefore particularly repeat it for your admonition: *Woe unto you also, ye* professed *interpreters of the law! for,* by your rigorous decisions on the ceremonial parts of it, and the human traditions which you have added to it, *you load* other *men with insupportable burdens, and* unmercifully lay them on, while *you yourselves will not touch the burdens with one of your fingers* [g], but suffer your lives to contradict your precepts, even in some of the most important instances.

46

Woe unto you! : build the seces of the pro- and your fa- illed them.

I also solemnly denounce a *woe unto you* all, for the malignity and cruelty of your tempers under this mask of piety and devotion! *for* at a great expence *you build* and adorn *the sepulchres of the prophets,* as if you had a mighty veneration *and* affection for them, though *your fathers slew them.* But as you are regardless of the instructions that the prophets gave, and appear in your conduct to imitate your fathers, *truly you bear witness to* them, rather than against them, *and* in effect *approve* and vindicate *the works of your fathers* [h]; *for* as *they indeed slew them, and you build their sepulchres,* one would imagine that you erected these monuments not so much in honour of the slaughtered prophets as of the persecutors by whom they were so wickedly destroyed. (Compare Mat. xxiii. 29.—32, sect. clviii.)

47

Truly you bear s that ye allow eds of your fa- for they indeed them, and ye their sepulchres.

48

Therefore

Will not touch the burden with one of ngers.] Perhaps their consciences charge them with some private npt of the injunctions they most usly imposed upon others in *ceremo-* ceepts as well as *moral*; or it may o the want of a due tenderness for mfort of men's lives, which they im- ed by such rigour. This seems to against *Trigland (de Karæis,* p. 58, *& seq.*)that these *lawyers* were not *Karaites;* for these added not *traditionary burdens* to the law.

h *And* in effect *approve* and vindicate *the works of your fathers.*] Archbishop *Tillotson,* Vol. II. p. 195, 196.) has set this text in a most strong and beautiful light, and hinted the turn which I have given it in the *paraphrase.*

SECT. CX.

Luke XI. 49.

Therefore, also the wisdom of God hath said[1] and I am in his name commissioned to declare it as his determinate purpose, *I will yet send them* other *prophets and* extraordinary messengers, particularly the *apostles*, who shall declare my gospel to them, as the last expedient for their recovery and salvation; but such I know to be the hardness of their hearts, that they will generally despise *and* reject them; nay, [*some*] *of them they*

50 *will kill, and* will *persecute* the rest: So that by filling up the measure of their sins, they will bring such a terrible destruction upon themselves, *that the blood of all the prophets* and martyrs, *which has been* cruelly *shed from the foundation of the world, may* seem to *be required of this ge-*

51 *neration.* Even *from the blood of* righteous *Abel*, who in those early ages for his distinguished piety was murdered by his inhuman brother, *to the blood of Zechariah*[k], one of the last of the prophets, *who was slain between the altar and the temple* (2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22). *Yea*, in the strongest terms *I tell you*, and repeat it again, The ruin, God will bring upon you in his righteous judgment, shall be so dreadful, that *it shall* seem as if the guilt of all their blood had been laid up in store, that it might *be required* at the hands *of this generation*, and heap aggravated ruin on their heads. (Compare Mat. xxiii. 34—36, sect. clviii.)

52 And I will add, that the disguises thrown on scripture, and the methods used to conceal it from the people, have done a great deal to bring on this terrible sentence: *woe* therefore *unto you, interpreters of the law*, on this account! *for* by these unrighteous practices *you have*, as it were, *taken*

49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they shall slay and persecute:

50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

51 From the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

52 Wo unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken

[1] *Therefore also the wisdom of God hath said.*] Dr. *Guyse* (with *Markius, Exerc.* p. 669) paraphrases this clause as the words of the *historian*, and supposes him here to apply this character to Christ, and to declare that *Christ, the wisdom of God, farther said, I will send them prophets*, &c.—I doubt not but Christ might with great propriety be spoken of by that phrase: but, with all due respect to that learned and pious interpreter, I cannot apprehend it to be the sense of this passage; not only because the *phraseology* is unexampled in the *evangelists*, but chiefly because *our Lord* does not say, I send to *you* but to *them*. Yet I see no reason to conclude (with Mr. *Whiston*, in his *Essay for restoring the Old Testament*, p. 228) that this is a *quotation* from any ancient writer. Christ was empowered, without any such voucher, to declare what *the counsels of Divine wisdom* had determined; and this manner of speaking strongly intimates that he was so; in which view it has on this interpretation a peculiar beauty and propriety.

[k] *The blood of Zechariah.*] What reason there is to conclude, the Zechariah here spoken of is that *prophet* of whose death we have an account in 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, *& seq.* will be shewn in *note* g on Mat. xxiii. 35, *sect.* clviii.

[1] The

taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in, ye hindered.

taken away the key of Divine *knowledge*[l]; and instead of tracing out a spiritual Messiah in scripture, and illustrating the testimony which the sacred oracles bear to him, you have rather abetted the popular prejudices against him; and have been so perverse and obstinate in your opposition to the gospel, as that *you have not entered in* to the kingdom of heaven *yourselves and* even *those that* otherwise were disposed to do it, and *would have entered in, you* by your wicked management *have hindered.* SECT. CX. Luke XI. 52.

53 And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge *him* vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things:

54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

But while he spake these severe and awful *things* with so much freedom *to them, the scribes and pharisees* were so exceedingly provoked that they *began fiercely to fasten upon him*[m], *and rudely* endeavoured *to urge him to speak of many things* that were the most exceptionable topics. There- by *laying snares for him, and attempting*, if possible, *to start some* unguarded *word*[n], which they hoped might fall *from his mouth* in the warmth of natural resentment; *that they might* take occasion to *accuse him* for it before the Roman governor, or the Jewish sanhedrim: but the prudence of Christ frustrated their malice, in the midst of all the plainness of his faithful rebukes. 53 54

IMPROVE-

l *The key of knowledge.*] *Vitringa* understands this of *one fundamental truth*, which would have led them into the knowledge of the rest (*Observ. Sacr.* lib. i. p. 125): but all their endeavours to embarrass and bias the minds of men in their inquiries after truth might be intended here; as well as more especially their disguising the *prophecies* which related to the Messiah.—If a *key* was delivered to them as the badge of their office (see p. 463, *note* g. and *Camero* on this place), there may be a beautiful allusion to that circumstance; as if he should have said, *You take that key, not to use, but to secrete it.* See Archbisop *Tillotson*, Vol. I. p. 208.)—*Elsner* has well shewn on this text that the *heathen priests* were called κληδουχοι, *key-bearers*. *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 228, 229.

m *Fiercely to fasten upon him.*] So δεινως ενεχειν properly signifies (see *note* g on Mark vi. 19, p. 158).—Several more of the words here used are *metaphors* taken from *hunting*. Αποστοματιζειν might be rendered *to mouth* or bear down with the violence of their words, as Theophylact excellently explains it; but the addition of περι πλειονων engaged me rather to translate it as I have done. Grotius and Casaubon have shewn that it sometimes signifies *to examine in a magisterial way*; but Erasmus's note is, on the whole, the best I have seen upon this word.

n *To start some* unguarded *word.*] Θηρευσαι in this connection has a most beautiful propriety, and signifies *the eagerness* with which *sportsmen* beat about for their game to *start it* from its covert.—It is very probable as Mr. *Cradock* conjectures, that *the Pharisee*, who was master of the house, had invited a great many of his brethren and learned friends on purpose to make a more formidable attack upon Christ, and by their concurrent testimony to charge upon him any thing which might render him obnoxious: and the presence of so many of them made the discourse delivered at this time more proper, and the courage and zeal it expressed more remarkable. See *Cradock's Harmony*, part ii. p. 6.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. CX. *Faithful are the wounds of a friend;* and such were the reproofs of *Christ* on this occasion. How well had all the entertainments of the *Pharisee's* table been repaid, had he and his brethren heard them with candour, humility, and obedience! These men despised them to *their ruin;* let us often review them for our instruction, that none of these dreadful *wocs* may come upon us.

Luke XI. 39. & *seq.*

39, 42 This discourse of *our Lord* is a most just and severe rebuke to every *hypocritical* professor, who is scrupulous and exact in matters of *ceremony*, while he neglects *morality;* and is studious to shine in the sight of men, while he forgets the all-penetrating eye 43 of God. It exposes the *ostentation* of those who pride themselves in empty *titles of honour*, and eagerly affect *precedence* and *supe-* 46 *riority.* And it evidently chastises those who *press on others* the duties they *neglect themselves*, and so are most righteously *judged out of their own mouth.*

44 How melancholy it is to observe, in instances like these, the *hypocrisy* and deceitfulness of the human heart, and its desperate and unfathomable wickedness! and to see how men impose upon 47, 49 themselves with empty appearances, like these *Pharisees;* who *built the sepulchres of the* former *prophets*, while they were *persecuting* those of their own day; and, in contempt of all that was 50, 51 said by the messengers of God, were *filling up the measure of their iniquities*, till the cloud which had been so long gathering burst on their heads, and poured forth a storm of aggravated wrath and ruin!

May that God, who has an immediate access to the hearts of men, deliver all *christian* countries, and especially all *protestant* 52 churches, from such *teachers* as are here described: who *take away* and secrete *the key of knowledge* instead of using it, and *obstruct*, rather than promote, men's *entrance* into the kingdom of heaven! How loud will *the blood* of the souls they have betrayed cry against them in the awful day of accounts! and how little will the *wages of unrighteousness*, and the rewards of worldly policy, be able to warn them against *destruction*, or to support them under it!

SECT.

SECT. CXI.

Christ cautions his disciples against hypocrisy, and animates them against the fear of men by the promise of extraordinary assistance from his Spirit in their greatest trials. Luke XII. 1—12.

LUKE XII. 1.

1 IN the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

LUKE XII. 1.

SECT. CXI.

Luke XII. 1.

IN the mean time, while Christ was thus discoursing at the Pharisee's house, *many thousands of people were gathered together*[a], and pressed with *so* much eagerness to hear him, *that they* even *trampled on each other: and* [*Jesus*] going forth among them, *began to say to his disciples* in the presence of them all, See that you more especially beware, and *above all things take heed to yourselves of* being corrupted by *the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy;* a vice which secretly puffs up their minds, and strangely spreads itself through their hearts and lives, so as to taint and spoil the very best of their duties.

2 For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

2 But seriously reflect upon the folly of it; *for* you may assure yourselves, as I have told you formerly (Mat. x. 26. Mark iv. 22. and Luke viii. 17.) that *there is nothing* now so secretly *concealed which shall not be* discovered, and be openly *unveiled* another day; *nor* any thing so artfully disguised or *hid, which shall not* then at least *be made known,* if God does not more immediately expose those shallow artifices, which he now discerns and abhors.

3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light: and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops.

3 *So that whatever you have spoken* with the utmost caution, *in* the thickest *darkness, shall* then *be* published and *heard in the* clearest effulgence of *light: and what you have whispered in* the most retired chambers and *closets, shall* then *be proclaimed* aloud as *from the house-tops* in the audience of all.

4 And I say unto you, my friends, Be not

4 *And* therefore let it be your care, not merely to save appearances, but to maintain a good conscience, though at the greatest expence: for *I say unto you, my* dear *friends,* with all possible seriousness, and most tender concern for your everlasting

[a] *Many thousands of people were gathered together.*] It would be more exactly rendered *many myriads;* but lest every English reader should not know that *a myriad* is ten thousand, I render it *many thousands;* nor is it necessary to take the word in its strictest sense. Perhaps this *vast assemblage of people* might be owing to an apprehension either that Christ might meet with some ill usage among so many of his enemies, or that he would say or do something peculiarly remarkable on the occasion.—Compare Luke v. 17, 19. sect. xlv.

[b] *For*

SECT. CXI.

Luke XII. 4.

everlasting welfare, *Fear not those, who* at the worst can only *kill the body, and after that have nothing more which they can do,* the immortal soul being entirely out of their reach as soon as it has quitted the body. *But I will point out to you* the great Object *whom you shall fear,* while I exhort you most reverentially to *fear* the great Almighty God, even *him, who, after he has killed* the body, *has power to cast* both that and the soul *into hell; yea,* knowing that I cannot too often inculcate it, *I say unto you* again, *Fear him,* and rather choose to venture on the greatest dangers, and to sacrifice your lives, than to do any thing which may offend his Divine Majesty. (Compare Mat. x. 28, p. 397.)

not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

6 In the mean time remember, that your enemies cannot hurt even your bodies without his knowledge and permission; for his Providence extends itself even to the meanest works of his hands: for instance, *Are not five sparrows sold for* so inconsiderable a sum as *two farthings*[b] *?* and *yet not one of them,* minute and worthless as they are, *is forgotten before God;* but he attends to all the circumstances of their lives and deaths.

6 Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

7 Surely then you will not be overlooked by him: *but* may justly conclude that he has such a special and particular concern for you, as that *even the very hairs of your head are all numbered,* so that not one of them can perish without his notice. *Fear not therefore;* for as men, and much more as my servants and friends, *you are more valuable than many sparrows,* and will be more remarkably his care than they.

7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

8 *But* howsoever he may now permit you to be persecuted by your enemies for your fidelity to me, though he should even suffer you to sacrifice your lives in so honourable a cause, you will be far from being losers by it in the end: for *I say unto you,* That *if any one shall* freely *acknowledge* his faith in *me before men*[c], *the Son of man* himself *shall also acknowledge* his complacency in such a person, and his relation to *him,* even *before the angels*

8 Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.

b *For two farthings, ασσαριων δυο.*] This was a *Roman coin,* that was then current in Judea, called *as,* or anciently *assarius,* which was the *tenth part* of the *denarius* or *Roman penny,* in value about *three farthings* of our money. *Two sparrows* might be bought for *one,* and *five* for two of these. Compare Mat. x. 29, *sect.* LXXVI.

c *If any one shall acknowledge me,* &c.] The idioms of *languages* differ so much, that what is very elegant and proper in one, may, if verbally translated, be contrary to *grammar* in another. This *verse* and the following are instances of it. It seems to me a kind of superstition to scruple such *little changes* as I have here made.

d *Him*

SECT. CXI.

9 But he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God.

gels of God, when they come to attend on his final triumph. *But as for him that* basely and perfidiously *renounces me before men*, and is ashamed or afraid of maintaining so good a cause, *him will I* also *renounce before the* holy *angels of God*[d], when they appear in a radiant circle around me, and wait, with solemn and observant silence, the important event of that awful day. (Comp. Mat. x. 29—33, p. 399, 400.)

Luke XII. 9.

10 And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.

Nothing can therefore be more dangerous and fatal, than to oppose my cause, *and* that especially when the Spirit is sent down on my followers after my resurrection and ascension: for *whosoever shall speak a* reflecting *word against the Son of man* in this present state of his humiliation and suffering, he may possibly hereafter repent, and on that repentance *it may be forgiven him*[e]; *but as for him that blasphemeth the Holy Spirit*, who shall then display his most glorious agency as my great Advocate and Witness; as for the wretch that maliciously imputes to diabolical operation the most convincing evidences of Divine power and goodness, that shall be given by the Spirit after his effusion, his crime is of such a nature, that *it shall not be forgiven him*; for he has thus opposed the last method of God's recovering grace, and shall, as utterly incorrigible, be abandoned to final destruction. (See Mat. xii. 31, and note p, p. 324.) 10

11 And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and *unto* magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how

But let me add, that however others may be affected by this testimony of the Spirit, one happy effect of its operation shall be to furnish you, my apostles, for an honourable discharge of your office in its most difficult parts: and therefore, in the opposition you shall meet with from your enemies and persecutors, *when they shall bring you before* the judicial courts which assemble in *the synagogues, and* even before greater *magistrates, and* the supreme *powers*, whether Jewish or heathen; though they may have, not only your 11

[d] *Him will I* also *renounce*, &c.] Nothing can be more majestic than this view which Christ gives of himself. To be *renounced by him* is spoken of as a circumstance which would expose a man to the contempt of the whole *angelic* world, and leave him no remaining shelter or hope. Compare Mat. vii. 23, *sect.* xliii. *note* d, p. 239. and John v. 22, *& seq. sect.* xlvii. *note* b, p. 260.

[e] *It may be forgiven him.*] The common rendering of αφεθησεται is more *literal*; but the *connection* shews it must be taken as here; for it would be madness to imagine that, in such a case as this, *forgiveness* must come of course, whether the *blasphemer* did or did not repent. What *grammarians* call an *enallage of moods and tenses* is very frequent; and I shall not always think it necessary to trouble the reader with an apology, when the reason of the change is so evident.

SECT. CXI.

Luke XII. 12.

your liberty, but your life in their hands, yet *be not anxious how* to behave, *or what apology you shall make* for yourselves,[f], *or what you shall say* in defence of the gospel you preach: *For the Holy Spirit* himself *shall teach you in that very hour*, or in the season of the greatest difficulty and extremity, *what you ought to say*, and what answer you should make to their most captious inquiries, or most invidious charges: (compare Mat. x. 19, 20, sect. lxxv.) Proper thoughts and expressions shall freely flow in upon you as fast as you can utter them; so that with undaunted courage you shall be able to vindicate the honour of my gospel, and to confound the most artful or most potent of your enemies.

how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:

12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour, what ye ought to say.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 LET us from this discourse, which we have been reading, learn the *folly of hypocrisy*, as well as the *wickedness* of it. *A lying tongue is but for a moment* (Prov. xii. 19); and the great approaching *judgment-day* will shew all in their true colours. May 2, 3 we live as those, who are then to be *made manifest!* May the *leaven* of deceit, by Divine grace, be entirely purged out of our hearts; and all our conduct be so fair and equal, that it may appear more honourable and lovely, in proportion to the accuracy with which it is examined; as the whitest garments are recommended by being seen in the strongest light!

If we would preserve such an integrity of soul, let us endeavour 4 to get above the servile *fear of man; of man, that shall die, and of the son of man, that shall be made as grass; as if the oppressor* had us in his power, and *were ready to destroy: and where is the fury of the oppressor?* (Isa. li. 12, 13.) With what infinite ease can God restrain it; and, when it is let loose in all its violence, how little can it do to hurt his faithful servants! Let this mean passion 5 be over-awed by *the fear of* that *God*, who has *our eternal all* in his hands; whose vengeance, or favour, will reach far beyond the grave, and determine our final misery or felicity, as we are the objects of the one or the other.

While

[f] *Be not anxious how* to behave, *or what apology you shall make* for yourselves.] It is not without reason that Christ so often touches on this topic. The *apostles*, being poor and illiterate men, would naturally have been thrown into confusion when they appeared as *criminals* in the presence of persons in the highest stations of life; and their *solicitude* would be in some measure proportionable to their *piety*, if they apprehended the *gospel*, which was dearer to them than their own lives, might suffer by the hurry and disorder of their thoughts, when they were thus called publicly to defend it. Compare *note*[e] on Mat. x. 19, p. 595.

While we are in the world, let us labour after a firm faith in the *universality of Divine Providence*; from which *the least* of his *creatures* are not exempted, nor are they forgotten by it. Let us endeavour to enjoy the pleasure and comfort of such a thought; assuring ourselves, that He, who regards the life of *birds* and of *insects*, will not neglect the care and preservation of *his children*. SECT. CXI. Ver. 6, 7

In a steady persuasion of this, let us determine courageously to *confess* and maintain his gospel in the extremest danger; knowing that thus only we shall secure the honour of being *owned by Christ*, amidst all the glories of his final appearance. 8, 9

And, in a word, to animate us to this holy courage, and to assist us in every other duty, let us earnestly pray for the *Holy Spirit*; by whose influence the *apostles* were instructed and supported in the discharge of their difficult and various offices; whose *grace* therefore must be abundantly *sufficient for us*, to cause us *to abound in every good word and work*. (2 Cor. ix. 8.) 11, 12

SECT. CXII.

Christ, being desired to interpose in a dispute between two brethren about property, declines the decision of the case; and takes occasion to advance a caution against covetousness, which he inforces by the parable of the rich fool. Luke xii. 13—21.

LUKE XII. 13.

AND one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

LUKE XII. 13.

SECT. CXII.

AND while he was discoursing thus to his disciples, *one of the crowd* that was then about Jesus, *said to him*, *Master*, I desire thou wouldst *speak to my brother, that he would* agree to *divide the inheritance with me*, which since the death of our father he injuriously detains to himself; for thou art well known to be a Person of such an extraordinary character, that I would hope his reverence to thine authority may induce him to do me justice. Luke XII. 13.

14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

But Jesus, as *he* did not come to meddle in such matters, prudently *replied*[a], *Man*, what dost thou mean by such a rash appeal to me? *Who constituted me a judge* in temporal concerns, *or* set me up as *a divider over you?* My kingdom is of a spiritual nature; and as to the civil rights and properties of men, I intermeddle not with them 14

[a] *He* prudently *replied.*] This appellant probably thought, that, as the Messiah, he would act in the character of a *prince*, who would decide controversies relating to *property*.—My rendering the phrase, *he said unto him*, by the equivalent word *replied*, will not, I hope, be thought to need any apology.

SECT. cxii. them, but leave them just as I found them. (Compare Exod. ii. 14.)

Luke XII. 15. *And* upon this occasion, though *he* would not interpose in the affair, yet, to prevent their being fond of the enjoyments of the world, and to preserve them from a covetous disposition, Jesus *said* to his disciples, and *to them* that were present, *See to it, that* with the utmost care and resolution *you be upon your guard against* all kinds and degrees of *covetousness*[b]; *for* though it be a common, it is a very unreasonable vice; since it is evident, that the comfort and happiness of *a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions;* nor can the continuance of his life, even for the shortest period of time, be secured by that abundance.

15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 *And*, to enforce and illustrate this remark, *he spake a* very instructive *parable to them, and said, There was a certain rich man, whose ground bore fruit* so *plentifully*, that he had not room to receive and lay up in store the vast produce of his 17 harvest. *And he* found all his plenty an incumbrance to him, so that he *reasoned with himself*, not without some considerable anxiety of mind, *saying, What shall I do? for I have not room* at present *to store up my crop*, should I stow 18 it ever so close. *And*, after some pause, *he* came to a resolution, and *said, I will do this*, as what appears to me the wisest scheme; *I will pull down my* old *barns, and build* new, which shall be *larger*, and much more commodious than they; *and there I will gather in all my* rich *increase* this year, *and* all *my goods* that I already 19 have in store: *And* then *I will* retire from business, and sit down and enjoy the fruits of my former labours, and will *say to my soul* with complacency and confidence, O my *soul, thou hast* now an *abundance of goods laid up*, on which thou mayest comfortably subsist *for many* future *years; repose thyself* therefore after all thy fatigues; *eat* and *drink* freely, without any fear of exhausting thy stores; *and be* as *merry* as corn, and wine, and oil, shared with thy most jovial 20 companions, can make thee. *But God* beheld him with

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink *and* be merry.

20 But God said unto

b *See to it, that* with the utmost care *you be upon your guard against* all kinds and degrees of *covetousness.*] Ὁρᾶτε καὶ φυλάσσεσθε is a lively phrase, the full force of which I have endeavoured to express in the *paraphrase*, not being able exactly to do it in the *version*. (Compare *note* c, on Mat. xvi. 6, p. 457.) — Some old *versions* and very good *copies* read it, *from all covetousness;* to which I have shewn so much regard, as to insert the word *all* in the *paraphrase;* as it is certain, at least, that *our Lord* intended the caution in *this extent*, whether he did or did not so particularly express it.

c *Thy*

to him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?

with just displeasure, and by the awful dispensation of his Providence, in effect *said to him*, amidst all this gaiety of heart, in the variety of his schemes and hopes, *Thou fool*, who dost thus stupidly forget both the dignity and the mortality of thy nature, and thy continual dependence upon me thy supreme Lord! know to thy terror, that while thou art talking of a long succession of pleasurable years, *this* very *night thy soul shall be demanded of thee*[c], and be hurried away to its place; *and* then, where will all its boasted entertainments be, or *who shall possess what thou hast* thus laboriously *provided*, but shalt thyself never enjoy? And accordingly the unhappy creature died that night, and all his wealth could do no more for him than furnish out the expences of his funeral. SECT. CXII. Luke XII. 20.

21 So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

And *so*, or such a fool in the Divine account, [*is*] *he that heaps up treasures to himself*, here on earth, *and is not rich with respect to God*[d] in acts of charity and piety, which would secure a fund of celestial treasures, lodged in his almighty hand, and therefore inviolably safe from such calamitous accidents as these. 21

IMPROVEMENT.

Most prudently did *our Lord* decline the invidious office of an *arbitrator* in civil affairs; and wisdom will require his *ministers* generally to avoid it likewise. It is more suitable to our office, like our blessed Master, to endeavour to draw off and disengage the minds of men from *covetousness*, and to pluck up the root of those eager *contentions*, which so often divide even the *nearest relations*, and inspire them with mutual aversions, more invincible *than the bars of a castle.* (Prov. xviii. 19.) Ver. 13, 14

And that a *covetous desire* of the enjoyments of the world may not create *contentions*, and engage us in pursuits that will be fatal to our souls, let us seriously consider the true value of things, and reflect how little *riches* can do to make us *happy* if we obtain them; 15

c *Thy soul shall be demanded of thee.*] It is in the *original*, ἀπαιτουσιν, *They shall demand thy soul. Elsner* thinks it alludes to the *messengers sent to fetch away the soul*; and produces a remarkable and well known passage from Plato, to prove that Socrates thought this the office of *a spirit* superior to men; see *Elsner Obser.* Vol. I. p. 231.

d *Rich with respect to God.*] There is a force and propriety in the *phrase* εις Θεον, which our language will not exactly express. It represents God as a *depositary*, in whose hands the good man has lodged his treasure; and who has, as it were, made himself accountable for it in another and better world. Compare Prov. xix. 17.

SECT. CXII.

them; and how very uncertain that *life* is, on the continuance of which our possession of them does so evidently depend. But, alas, how many are there, who are now as deeply engaged in their worldly schemes, as this *rich fool* in the *parable*, to whom God will, in a few weeks, or days, if not *this very night*, say, by the awful voice of his irresistible providence, *Thy soul is required of thee!* And then, what will all these treasures do to purchase *life*, or to allay the agonies of *death?* So far will they be found from being capable of this, that they will rather serve to increase and imbitter the surprise and anguish of those agonies.

Ver. 16 & seq. 20

21 Let it then be our labour and care that we may be *rich towards God;* rich in works of piety and charity. So shall we safely consign over *our treasure* to the bank of heaven, and shall be *enriched* by it, when we leave the world as *naked* as we entered upon it, and lose all but what has been so wisely and happily spent.

SECT. CXIII.

Christ repeats the cautions and arguments against an anxious and covetous temper, which he had formerly given in his sermon on the mount. Luke XII. 22—34.

LUKE XII. 22.

SECT. CXIII.

THUS Jesus cautioned his followers against setting their hearts on worldly treasures; but as most of them were in such low circumstances as to be in greater danger of immoderate solicitude about the necessary supplies of life, he proceeded to caution them against this, by repeating some of those admonitions which he had formerly delivered in his sermon on the mount[a]. *And* accordingly *he said to his disciples, For this cause,* that is, considering the great uncertainty of riches, *I say to you,* and strictly charge it upon you, That you *be not anxious about your life, what ye shall eat,* or how you shall procure food to support it; *nor for the body, what you shall put on* to cover, defend and adorn it. For you must needs be sensible, *the life* itself, which you have received from God without any care or thoughtfulness of yours, *is* much *more* important *than meat, and the body than raiment;*

Luke XII. 22.

23

LUKE XII. 22.

AND he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

23 The life is more than meat, and the body

[a] Repeating some of those admonitions, &c.] Most of the thoughts and expressions used here occurred before, sect. xli. and are, I hope, sufficiently explained there. I content myself therefore with referring the reader to it.

body *is more* than raiment.

raiment; and well then may you hope that the great Author of your life, and the Former of your body, will maintain his own work in a proper manner, without your anxiety and solicitude about it.

24 Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

Especially may you expect it, when you see the care which he takes of the inferior creatures: as, for instance, *consider the ravens,* how they are subsisted; *for they neither sow, nor reap, and have neither storehouse nor barn,* to lay up any thing against a time of want; nay, their young ones are early deserted by their dams; and *yet,* voracious as they are, *God* one way or other *feedeth them,* so that you see the species is still continued: now, *how much more are you better than* they? and how much rather may you hope to be supplied with *the* necessaries of life, than any kind of *birds?* (Compare Mat. vi. 25, 26. p. 227.)

25 And which of you, with taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit?

And moreover, as this care is unnecessary, it will also be unprofitable; for *which of you, by taking* the most solicitous *thought, can add a single cubit,* or the least measure or moment, either *to his age* or stature? (Compare Mat. vi. 27. and note[h] on that text, sect. xli.)

26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

If then you cannot do the least matter[b], as in this proverbial expression you grant, *why are you anxious about the rest,* as if you were to hold your life by a kind of perpetual lease, and were secure against all danger of a sudden ejectment?

27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not: and yet I say unto you, That Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

But, to pursue the argument I began before, Do but *consider* God's providential care, even of the vegetable creation: survey, for instance, *the* fair and beautiful *lilies,* and reflect *how they grow; they neither labour* to prepare the materials of their dress, *nor spin* it into that curious form; and *yet* Providence clothes them in so elegant and splendid a manner, that *I say unto you, Even Solomon,* when on some grand festival he appeared *in all his* utmost *magnificence, was not arrayed* in so beautiful a white *as one of these.*

28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more *will he clothe you,* O ye of little faith?

And if God so clothe and adorn *the grass of the field,* among *which* the lilies grow, though it *is* [*flourishing*] *to-day* in all its verdure, *and* by *to-morrow is* cut down and *thrown into the furnace* or still (see note[i] on Mat. vi. 30. sect. xli. p. 229), *how much more* [*will he clothe*] *you*

[b] *If then you cannot do the least matter.*] This proves, that *to add one cubit to a thing* was a *proverbial* expression for making the least addition to it.

[c] *Nor*

SECT. CXIII. *you, O ye of little faith,* who thus suspect his care?

Luke XII. 29. *And do not you* then, who are acquainted with the care of Providence, and are particularly interested in it, be solicitous to *seek what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor be* like meteors in the air, that are tossed about by every blast of wind, hurried with anxious cares, and *agitated with* a variety of *restless* and uneasy *thoughts*[c].

29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30 *For the* Gentile *nations of the world,* who know little of Providence, or of a future state, *seek after all these* lower *things* with great solicitude; and they are more excusable in doing it: *but* you are directed to much nobler objects of pursuit, and furnished with a more substantial support against such anxieties, in that paternal relation which God avows to you; and as *your* heavenly *Father* well *knows that you have need of these things,* he will certainly provide them for you

30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31 in a proper degree. Leave them therefore to his care; and, low as your condition is, be not uneasy and disquieted about them; *but seek ye rather the kingdom of God,* and labour to promote its interest among men; *and* then you may depend upon it, not only, that you shall obtain that most important prize, but likewise, that *all these* other necessary *things shall be added to you,* without your anxiety. (Compare Mat. vi. 31—33. p. 229.)

31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.

32 I repeat the encouraging thought; *Fear not,* ye *little flock,* my dear property and charge, however feeble you may seem; fear not, I say, that you shall be left destitute of these common blessings of Divine Providence; *for it is your* heavenly *Father's* gracious *pleasure to give you* what is infinitely more valuable, even *the kingdom* of eternal glory: and can you possibly imagine that, while he intends to bestow that upon you, and even takes pleasure in the thought of making you so great and happy there,[d] he will

32 Fear not, little flock: for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

[c] *Nor be agitated with restless thoughts.*] After all the various and perplexed things which *critics* have said on this word, μετεωρίζεσθε (of which a very large account may be seen in the learned Wolfius), the sense I have taken is the most simple, and, especially here, the most natural. The authorities produced by *Elsner (Obser.* Vol. I. p. 233, 234), and several of those mentioned by *Raphelius (Annot. ex Xen.* p. 97, 98), seem to me to favour this sense, though some of them are produced to establish another. It appears from them, that any speculations and musings, in which the mind *fluctuates,* or is *suspended* in an uneasy hesitation, might well be expressed by such a word.

[d] Takes pleasure in the thought of making you so great and happy there.] This is the beautiful and wonderful import of the word ευδοκησεν in this connection: which generally signifies *a pleasurable acquiescence.*

And

will refuse you those earthly supplies, which he liberally imparts even to strangers and enemies? SECT. CXIII.

Luke XII. 33.

33 Sell that ye have, and give alms: provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

Animated therefore by such a hope and confidence, instead of being solicitous to increase your possessions to the utmost, rather be prepared, when Providence shall call you to *sell what you* already *have, and distribute* [*it*] *in charity*;[e] and so you may *provide for yourselves purses which do not grow old* and wear out,[f] even *a never-failing treasure in heaven*, that region of security and immortality, *where no thief approaches* to plunder the riches of its inhabitants, *nor doth the moth* corrode and *spoil* the robes of glory, in which they appear. And the more careful should you be about this heavenly treasure, *because* it is certain, that *where* that which you account *your* chief *treasure is* laid up, *there will your heart be also* fixed, and the whole tenor of your thoughts and affections will naturally flow in that channel.) Compare Mat. vi. 20, 21, 226.)

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 34

IMPROVEMENT.

ARE we not all conscious to ourselves, that on such topics as these, we need *line upon line, and precept upon precept*, as being too deficient in our *regard*, though *God speak once, yea twice?* (Job xxxiii. 14.) We see our heavenly Father *crowning the earth with his goodness*: to this day does he *clothe the grass and the flowers* with the same profusion of ornament; to this day does he Ver. 22, 29 27, 28

And agreeable to this, it is most edifying and delightful to observe, how God is represented in scripture, as *enjoying his own prescience*, as it were, with a peculiar relish, in the view of those glories which he has prepared for his people. Hence those emphatical phrases of *wisdom rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth*, or in the prospect and idea of them, before they were actually made, (Prov. viii. 31.) of *God's knowing the thoughts he thinks towards his people*, (Jer. xxix. 11. and of his *rejoicing over them with joy and silently resting in his love to them*, (Zeph. iii. 17.) The tenderness and energy of innumerable scriptures depends on this remark; and many of those relating to *election, predestination*, &c. which have been as *dry rods* of controversy, when considered in this view, bud out into a thousand fair leaves and fragrant blossoms of hope and joy.

[e] *Sell what you have and distribute it in charity.*] These words were probably as a fruitful *seed* in the minds of some who heard them: and the liberal *sale of estates* a few months after, by which so many poor Christians were subsisted, might be in a great measure *the harvest*,) which sprung up from it under the cultivation of the blessed Spirit. Nothing is more probable than that some of the many *myriads* now attending *our Lord*, (ver. 1.) might be in the number of the *thousands* then converted; see Acts ii. 41—45.

[f] *Purses which do not grow old*, and wear out.] This may be fitly taken as an allusion to the danger of losing money out of a *hole* worn in an *old purse*. Such is frequently the gain of this world, and so are its treasures hoarded up, and *put into a bag with holes*; (compare Hag. i. 6.) The *rich men* of Judea, so soon ravaged and destroyed

SECT. CXIII. he *feed the young ravens when they cry*, (Psal. cxlvii. 9.) nor is the meanest species of *insects* perished. Still does he *know our* 30 *necessities*; and still he addresses us in the same gracious language, and avows the same endearing paternal relation. The experience of his power, goodness, and fidelity, is increasing with every succeeding generation, with every revolving day. The 23 *life* that he has given, is supported by his care; and the same hand that formed *the body*, nourishes and clothes it. Let us then *cast all our care on him*, as being persuaded that *he careth for us;* 32 (1 Pet. v. 7.) Feeble as his *little flock* is, *it is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom*; and we are unworthy our share in so glorious a hope, if we cannot trust him for inferior blessings, and refer it to him to judge, in what manner our present wants are to be supplied.

30 Let the *heathens* abandon themselves to these low *anxieties;* but as for us, let us *thank God, and take courage*, opening our 33 hearts wide to every sentiment of *faith* in God, and *charity* to men; and while we have this inexhaustible *bank* to draw upon, let us be *rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate*, so *laying up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life!* (1 Tim. vi. 34 18, 19.) the very hope and expectation of which, if *our heart* be set upon it, will give us incomparably sweeter delight than the securest possessions of this empty world, and the most ample magazines of its richest stores.

SECT. CXIV.

Christ exhorts his disciples to watchfulness and fidelity, in expectation of his coming, and of the final account to be given for all their advantages. Luke XII. 55—48.

LUKE XII. 35.

SECT. CXIV. Luke XII. 35. OUR Lord having thus exhorted his disciples to a due moderation as to their worldly possessions, proceeded to press upon them a serious preparation for their final remove from earth, and for the awful solemnities of death, judgment, and eternity[a]. He therefore went on to say, Consider yourselves always as servants, who have a Master

LUKE XII. 35. LET your loins be girded about, and *your* lights burning;

stroyed by the Romans, particularly found it so.

[a] A serious preparation for—death, judgment, and eternity.] I shall give the reason of my interpreting this passage thus a little below in *note* f, though I am sensible the generality of readers would rather have expected an apology, if I had gone about to interpret it otherwise.

[b] *Let*

SECT. CXIV.

Luke XII. 35.

Master in heaven; and, that you may approve your diligence and fidelity to him, *let your loins be* still *girded up*, in a posture for active service, *and your lamps* be continually *burning* in a readiness to receive him;[b] *And be you*, on the whole, *like men* in a waiting posture, *who*, as good servants left with a proper charge, attending to the work appointed them, *wait for their Lord's return from a marriage-feast*[c], or any other late entertainment; *that whenever he comes and knocks* at the door, *they may immediately open* it *to him*, and not be surprised in any disorder. *Happy are those servants, whom, when their Lord comes, he shall find* thus *watching* for him: and happy also will you be, if this shall be your case. for *verily, I say unto you*, So condescending is your Lord and Master, *that*, if you answer this character, *he will* reward you as graciously as if some great man, absent on such an occasion as I have supposed, finding his servants diligently waiting for him at his return, should gather up his clothes and *gird himself, and cause them to sit down to supper, and* should *come forth* himself *and wait upon them*[d]. *And*, at whatever hour the time of his arrival be, *whether he shall come* early *in the second watch, or come* late *in the third watch* of the night[e], *and find* [*them*] *thus* employed, blessed and *happy are those* faithful *servants.*

36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37 Blessed *are* those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

39 And this know, that if the good man of the house had known

But do not think it is enough, if you would then be happy, to make some sudden preparation upon notice of his coming; for the day of the Lord

36 37 38 39

[b] *Let your loins be girded up, and your lamps burning.*] As the *Easterns* wore *long garments*, it was necessary that, when they had any thing to do which required them to exert their strength or agility, they should tuck them up and *gird them* close; a practice to which there are frequent references, both in the *Old Testament* and the *New*. (See 1 Kings xviii. 46. 2 Kings iv. 29. Job xxxviii. 3. Jer. i. 17. Eph. vi. 14. and 1 Pet. i. 13.)—That the *lamps* should be found extinguished, might be an inconvenient circumstance to the *master*, and would be a demonstration of the *servant's* idleness.—The expressions, taken together, may intimate the *care* we should take to inform ourselves in our duty, and the *resolution*, with which we should apply to the performance of it.

[c] *From a marriage feast.*] There is no particular mystery in this circumstance. *Our Lord* might probably instance in this, because *marriage feasts* were generally the most splendid, and so prolonged to the latest hours.

[d] *And* should *come forth* himself, *and wait upon them.*] It is true (as Grotius and many others observe) that the *Roman masters* did sometimes, during the *Saturnalia*, practise some condescensions like these to their *slaves*; but that was, perhaps, chiefly for their own diversion; and it is difficult to judge, how far *Christ's hearers* might be acquainted with it; at least the words would be very intelligible without supposing any such reference.

[e] *In the second or third watch* of the night.] This included all the time from *nine* in the *evening* to *three* in the *morning*: and was, as if he had said, whether he come *early* or *late*.

SECT. CXIV.

Luke XII. 39.

Lord so comes as a thief in the night; and *you know this, that* there is none so negligent and stupid, where a house is plundered, but *if the house-keeper*, who is entrusted with the care of it, *had been aware at what hour the thief would have come, he would* undoubtedly *have watched* at that time, *and would not have permitted his house to be broke open:* he then, that acts with prudence will be always on his watch, that, as he knows not when the thief will come, he may not find

known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through,

40 him unprepared. *Be you therefore also ready; for at such a season as you think not* of, and may least of all expect it, *the Son of man cometh* [f]; and as the day of final judgment will be a surprise to the world in general, so the day, when particular persons are called out of this life, is often a sudden thing, and too frequently a fatal surprise to the persons most intimately concerned in it. (Compare Mat. xxiv. 43, 44. sect. clxiii.)

40 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

41 *Peter then said unto him, Lord, dost thou speak this* awakening *parable* [g] *to us* thine apostles in particular? *or* is it *also unto all* in general, that what thou hast been saying is directed?

41 Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

42 *And the Lord said* in reply, Though none are entirely unconcerned, yet you my ministers are more peculiarly to apply it to yourselves, and to consider me as asking each of you, *Who is that faithful and prudent steward* [h], *[whom] his Lord shall set over* all *the servants of his family* [i], *to deal*

42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of meat in due season?

[f] *At such a season as you think not, the Son of man cometh.*] The *coming of the Son of man* often signifies his providential interposition for the destruction of Jerusalem; (see Mat. x. 23, *note* g, p. 396.) But here I think it cannot be taken in such a sense, because *our Lord* speaks of an immediate *reward* to be bestowed on all *faithful servants*, and an immediate *punishment* to be executed on all that were *unfaithful*; and expressly declares this to be a matter of *universal concern*; all which particulars have very little sense or propriety when applied to the *destruction of Jerusalem*. It must therefore be understood of *his coming* to remove them from the capacities of service here, to *give up their account*. And, if we suppose it to relate to *death* as well as *judgment* (which, by a consequence at least it undoubtedly does,) it strongly intimates his having such a *dominion* over the *invisible world*, that every soul removed into it might be said to be fetched away by him. Compare Rev. i. 18.

[g] *This* awakening *parable.*] It may signify particularly the similitude of *the Lord and his servants*, or may extend to the whole of the discourse.

[h] *Who is that faithful and prudent steward?*] This interrogation had a lively force to turn their thoughts inward, that each might ask himself, *Whether he was the man?* The *Prussian version* therefore (and that *English one* which follows it so close) loses much of the spirit of the passage in rendering it, *If there be any faithful steward*, &c.—

[i] *The servants of his family.*] So I render Θεραπεια, which (as *Elsner* shews at large, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 235.) exactly answers to the *Latin* famulitium, *all the servants of a family*, ; for which we have no one *English word*, any more than for σιτομετριον, which strictly signifies a *determinate measure of wheat*, but here is put for *all the daily food*; see *Erasmus* here.) By such a *version* the distinction between *this* and the 44th *verse* is set in a clearer light than *critics* have generally given it. To be raised from the care of *giving out food*

deal out to each of his domestics *the stated allowance of food in its* proper *season?* As the guilt of such an officer will be greater than that of a common servant, if he prove negligent; so the reward of his fidelity will be proportionably great. Peculiarly *happy is that servant* in so eminent a station, *whom his Lord at his arrival shall find thus employed* in a faithful discharge of the trust committed to him. *Truly I say to you, that he will* prefer him to a much higher station of honour and importance; as if a person finding his domestic steward thus faithful, should upon that, *appoint him to take the care of all that he hath*, abroad as well as at home. (Compare Gen. xxxix. 4, 5, 6.)

43 Blessed *is* that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

But, on the contrary, *if that servant* I spoke of before, as set over the family [k], should *say in his heart, My Lord delays his coming*, so that I have nothing to apprehend from it; *and*, on that foolish presumption, *shall* grow so indolent and wanton, as to *begin to beat* and abuse *the men and maid-servants, and to eat and drink* in a riotous *and* extravagant manner, so as to *debauch* [*himself*] with it: I assure you, that *the lord of that servant will come* upon him *in a day when he does not expect him, and in an hour which he is not aware of, and will* scourge him with such severity, that he will even *cut him asunder* [l]; *and*, notwithstanding the profession he has made, God *will appoint him his portion with the infidels* [m]; nay,

45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken:

46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

food to the servants, to have the charge of *the whole estate*, was a noble preferment.

k *If that servant* I spoke of before, &c.] It is necessary thus to go back to ver. 42 for the explication of *this*; for it is most evident, from the whole tenor of *scripture*, that *the servant* who at his Lord's coming has *passed his account* in an honourable manner will never afterwards be in danger of incurring his displeasure.

l Scourge him with such severity, that he will even *cut him asunder*.] Dr. Whitby has so clearly proved *this* to be the sense of διχοτομησει, that I am surprised that any should since have coldly rendered it, *shall separate him from the rest*. But this is one instance of many, in which the *version* of 1727 has followed the *Prussian Testament* in some of those parts of it which are the least judicious.—I know not on what authority it has been asserted that the word may only signify *confiscating his estate*. Wherever *it*, or any of its *derivatives*, occur in the *Septuagint*, it has always the signification which is here given it by *our version*, and generally answers to the *Hebrew* כרת. See Exod. xxix. 17. Lev. i. 8. Ezek. xxiv. 4, *Septuag.*

m *And appoint him his portion with infidels.*] It has been suggested to me by a person of great worth and eminence, that απιστων signifies *unfaithful*; and that had *infidelity*, or the *disbelief of the gospel*, been referred to here, the word would have been απιστιανων. But I must beg leave to observe, that απιστοις does in several places evidently signify *unbelieving*: compare John xx. 27. 1 Cor. vii. 12—15. x. 27. xiv. 22—24. (where there is an express opposition in ver. 22 between απιστοις and πιστευουσι); 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. 1 Tim. v. 8. And I cannot but think that the spirit of *this text* is much better expressed by such a *rendering*; especially when the *next verse* is compared with it, which shews that, though this *wicked servant* shall have *his portion* and *abode* with such (who, by the way, had they not been *unfaithful*, would not have been *unbelievers*), yet *his punishment*

SECT. CXIV.

nay, in some respects, his case shall be worse than theirs, as his opportunities and engagements have been so much greater.

Luke XII. 47. *And that servant, who,* like him I have been speaking of, *knew his Lord's will* by a particular declaration of it [n], *and,* disregarding the instructions given him, *did not keep himself ready* [o], *nor* set himself to *do according to his will, shall* have the sorest punishment inflicted on him, and *be beaten with many* [*stripes*] [p]. (Compare Deut. xxv. 2, 3.) 48 *But he who,* like the heathen, *did not know* the particulars of his duty by a clear revelation, *and* yet, sinning against that degree of light he had, *committed things which deserved stripes, shall be beaten* indeed, but *with fewer* and lighter [*strokes*] [q] than the other. *For* it is a received maxim among men, and God will make it the rule of his final judgment, that *much* improvement *shall be required from every one to whom much is given; and where much is deposited, the more will be demanded* in proportion to it. (Compare Numb. xv. 29, 30.)

47 And that servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself,* neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes.*

48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes.* For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

IMPROVE-

ment shall be *more grievous;* as there may be *a great difference* in the condition of *criminals* confined in the same prison.

[n] *Knew his Lord's will* by a particular declaration of it.] There is a force and propriety in these words beyond what is usually observed. *A servant* without *express instruction,* might know, that to *beat his fellow-servants,* and plunge himself into *debauchery,* would be offensive to *his master;* and he would therefore deserve *some correction:* but such a conduct in a *servant,* to whom *his master* had committed some particular charge, with *suitable instructions* for performing it, was most monstrous, and consequently deserved *severer punishment.*

[o] *Did not keep himself ready.*] So Mons. L'Enfant renders the word ἑτοιμασας, I suppose, to distinguish it from the following clause; and I follow him, though not without some hesitation. Perhaps both may be joined thus, *Did not prepare or set himself to do according to his will.*—But since I wrote this, I perceive a great *emphasis* in these words, which I did not before observe. The sense *rises* on that of the *foregoing verse;* as if *our Lord* had said, "Think not, that I merely intend to forbid such *gross immoralities* as drunkenness, riot, oppression, &c. but be assured, that *sins of omission,* where there have been fair opportunities of learning your duty, will expose you to the Divine correction."—The opposition here and in the *next verse* is between *a servant* who receives an *express message* from his master, which he contradicts; and *another* who, though he receive *no such express message,* yet falls into such instances of misbehaviour as he *cannot but know* to be inconsistent with his duty and office in general; by which he exposes himself justly to *some punishment,* though, other things being equal, he is *less criminal* than the former.

[p] *Shall be beaten with many stripes.*] *Scourging* was a usual *punishment* for negligent servants; but I cannot find that what is properly called *giving the bastinado* was in use among the Jews, though some suppose it to be referred to here.—Brennius thinks that these words have a peculiar reference to the case of *ministers,* who have such singular advantages for *knowing Christ's will;* so that they will certainly be in the number of the *most happy* or the *most miserable* of mankind. May they seriously consider it, and *rejoice with trembling* in those distinctions of their office, which will draw after them such solemn and weighty consequences!

[q] *Shall be beaten* indeed, but *with fewer strokes.*] This strongly intimates that *ignorance* will not entirely excuse any, who have neglected God's service, since they might in general have known at least the main branches of their duty; as *every servant* may know in the main what kind of conduct his master will approve, though some may be much more fully instructed than others as to his particular pleasure.

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY our souls be awakened by these awful truths! and may we be engaged *to gird up the loins of our mind, to be sober, and watch to the end!* (1 Peter i. 13.) SECT. CXIV.

Great are our encouragements to *diligence*, on the one hand; and, on the other, dreadful will be the punishment of our *neglect*. The time of *our Lord's appearance* is uncertain; let us therefore *always be ready*; solicitous that, when he comes, he may *find us so doing*, as he has required; *living not to ourselves, but to him*, and employing ourselves about *that particular thing*, whatsoever it may be, which, all circumstances considered, we are verily persuaded, may most promote the great ends of life, and the important purposes of his glory. Ver. 35, 36 40 43

How glorious are the *rewards* promised to such! How justly may they awaken our emulation! He will *prefer them* to stations of more honourable and important service. He will *set them down at his table*, and *minister* (as it were) *himself* to their delight, bringing forth the choicest dainties of heaven, and spreading before them an eternal banquet. *Lord*, may we, through thy grace, be found worthy to *taste of that supper!* May *the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne feed us, and guide us to fountains of living water!* (Rev. vii. 17.) 42, 44 37

On the other hand, let us seriously consider the *punishments* to be inflicted on the *unfaithful servant*. Let *ministers*, if such there are, who abandon themselves to a life of *idleness* and *luxury*; who stain their sacred character by *intemperance*; who proudly *censure their brethren*, and either call, or wish, for *the secular arm* to *smite their fellow-servants*, perhaps more faithful than themselves; let such hear and tremble. Their *Lord* may *come* in a very *unexpected hour*; (as indeed, when do such expect him?) and what are *the stripes* they have given others, when compared with those which they shall themselves receive? *stripes* which shall *cut them asunder*, and pierce deep into their very souls! How much *more tolerable* will it be, even for the worst of *Gentile sinners*, than for such! 45 46

Let all who are in any measure distinguished by the gifts of the Divine bounty to them, or by their stations, whether in *civil* or *sacred offices*, attentively dwell on this great truth, so solemnly repeated again and again; let them consider it with a view to their own account: *To whomsoever much is given, of him will much be required.* May Divine Grace so impress it on their hearts, that they may be distinguished by present *fidelity*, and future *rewards*, in proportion to the difference, which Providence has already made in their favour! And may they never have reason to reflect with confusion and anguish on what is now their honour and their joy! 48

SECT.

SECT. CXV.

Christ observes the evils which would be occasioned by his coming, yet declares his desire to complete his work, and warns the Jews of the great danger of neglecting the short remainder of their time of trial. Luke XII. 49, *to the end.*

LUKE XII. 49.

SECT. CXV.

Luke XII. 49.

OUR Lord farther added in his discourse to his disciples and the multitude: After all that I have said to promote humanity and charity, yet it will in fact appear, that *I am come to send fire on the earth*; so opposite is my doctrine to the prejudices and the lusts of men, and such are the violent contentions that my gospel will occasion, through the wickedness of those among whom it is preached: *and* yet *what do I wish?* that the gospel might be suppressed? nay, but I rather say, *Oh that* this fire, fierce as *it* shall be, *were already kindled*[a] by the universal propagation of a religion, whose blessings so abundantly counterbalance all the accidental evils which

50 can attend it! *But I have* indeed, in the mean time, a most dreadful *baptism to be baptized with*, and know that I shall shortly be bathed, as it were, in blood, and plunged in the most overwhelming distress: *yet*, far from drawing back on that account, *how* inexpressibly *am I straitened* and uneasy through the earnestness of my desire, *till*, terrible as it is, *it be* fully *completed*[b], and the glorious birth produced, whatever agonies may lie in the way to it!

51 But these benefits are to be secured in a very different manner from what some of you, my disciples, imagine: for *do you* now *suppose that I*

LUKE XII. 49.

I AM come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?

50 But I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

51 Suppose ye that I

a *And what do I wish? Oh that it were already kindled!*] I think Sir Norton Knatchbull has abundantly established *this version*. Dr. Whitby (who here, as in many other places, transcribes from *Grotius*) seems fully to have proved that τι sometimes has this force. Compare Luke xix. 42, and Numb. xxii. 29; Josh. vii. 7; Psal. lxxxi. 13, *Septuag.* (Perhaps we may add Luke xxii. 42.) See *Grotius, in loc.*

b *How am I straitened* and uneasy *till it be completed!*] The word συνεχομαι seems to import *an ardour of mind*, with which a person is so borne on towards the object of his affection and pursuit, that the necessary impediments, which lie in his way, are *uneasy* to him; compare 2 Cor. v. 14.—Mr. *Locke* understands it of a kind of *embarrassment* which Christ was under to know, how faithfully to fulfil his ministry without giving such umbrage to the Roman power as would have drawn persecution and death upon him before the appointed time; (see Mr. *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 134): but this seems to me a very foreign and unnatural sense.—That, which I take it in, is also favoured by Luke xxii. 15, sect. 168: but if Grotius, whose sense I have hinted in the *paraphrase*, judge rightly of the particular force and beauty of the word συνεχομαι, it may be illustrated by John xvi. 21, sect. CLXXVIII.

c Or

SECT. CXV.

Luke XII. 51.

I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division.

I am come to give peace on the earth, or immediately to establish that temporal tranquility and prosperity which you expect should attend the Messiah's kingdom [c]? *Nay, but* considering how my gospel, notwithstanding all its tendency to peace, will be opposed, and how it will be perverted, *I* may *say to you*, that I am *rather* come to occasion the most unnatural *division*. *For* such are the contentious heats and animosities that will attend the publication of the gospel, that, *ere long, five in one family shall be* so *divided*, that there shall be *three against two* on the one side, *and two against three* on the other: And this shall be the case when those families consist of persons in the nearest relations to each other: *the father*, for instance, *shall differ with the son, and the son with the father; the* fondest *mother with the daughter, and the daughter with the mother; the mother-in-law with her son's wife, and the daughter-in-law with her husband's mother* [d]; and so inveterate shall be their hatred against all that embrace my gospel, that they shall break the bands of nature, as well as of friendship, to express it. (Compare Mat. x. 34, 35, p. 400.)

52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, Three against two, and two against three.

52

53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother: the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

53

54 And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway

54

And he said also to the people, This perverseness already shews itself in your overlooking so many proofs of the Messiah's appearance among you, while you discover such a sagacity in your observations with respect to other things: for *when you see a cloud arising out of the west*, or coming from the Mediterranean sea, *you presently*

[c] Or immediately to establish that temporal tranquility, &c.] There are so many prophecies of *the peaceful state* of the *Messiah's kingdom* (compare Psal. lxxii. 7; Isa. ii. 4; xi. 6—9; lxv. 25), that it is hard to say how Christ could completely answer the character of the Messiah if he should never *give peace on earth*: but the error of the Jews lay in supposing he was *immediately* to accomplish it; whereas the prophecies of the New Testament, especially in the book of Revelation, shew, and those of the Old Testament most plainly intimate, that this *prosperous state* of his kingdom was not only to be preceded by his own sufferings, but by a variety of persecutions, trials, and sufferings, which should in different degrees attend his followers, before the *kingdoms of the earth became*, by a general conversion, *the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ* (Rev. xi. 15). See *Dr. Leland's Answer to the Moral Philosopher*, p. 353—366.

[d] *The mother-in-law with her son's wife, and the daughter-in-law with her husband's mother.*] The original words, πενθερα, and νυμφη, are exactly expressed in *this translation*. The English words *mother-in-law*, and *daughter-in-law*, are more extensive, and rather, though not necessarily, lead us to think of [*noverca*, μαλυια,] *a step-dame*, or *father's second wife*, and *her husband's daughter*.—*Our Lord* might mention *this relation*, because, in consequence of the obligation which the *Jewish children* were under to maintain their aged *parents*, a young man might, when he settled in the world, often take *his mother*, if a widow, into his family, and her abode in it might occasion less uneasiness than that of a *mother-in-law* in any other sense.

SECT. cvii.

ly say, A heavy shower is coming[e]*; and it is so.* straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is.

And when [you find] the south-wind blowing from the desert of Arabia, and other hot climates, *you* 55 And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

Luke XII. 55. *say, There will be sultry heat; and* so accordingly *it comes to pass.* 56 *Ye hypocrites,* that pretend to ask for farther signs, as if you were really desirous to know, whether I be or be not a Divine Teacher; *you know how* by such remarks as these *to distinguish the face of the earth and of the heavens,* so as to foretell the changes in the weather before they come; *but how is it that you do not discern* and judge of the much more evident signs of *this time,* which are attended with such manifest and unparalleled tokens of the Messiah's coming? (Compare Mat. xvi. 2, 3, p. 456.) 57 *Yea, why is it you do not even of yourselves judge what is* fit and *right*[f], and gather from such obvious premises, how you ought in reason and conscience to treat so extraordinary a Person as I appear to be from the whole series of my doctrine and conduct, instead of disregarding all the proofs that shew me to be sent from God? 58 This, however you may thoughtlessly neglect it, is a matter of the utmost importance: I must therefore enforce the exhortation I formerly gave you (Mat. v. 25, 26. p. 209), and press you to endeavour, with the greatest diligence, that the controversy may immediately be made up between God and your souls. For you count it a rule of human prudence, *when you go to the magistrate with your adversary,* who has a suit against you, to *use your* utmost *endeavour to make up the affair with him*[g] while you are yet *on*

56 Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth: but how is it that you do not discern this time?

57 Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

58 When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, *as thou art* in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he

[e] *A heavy shower is coming.*] Ομβρος properly signifies *a heavy shower;* and καυσων, in the next *verse, sultry* or *scorching heat.*

[f] *Why is it you do not even of yourselves,* &c.] The phrase αφ' ἑαυτων does not seem here to signify, "From the like principles of good sense which you use in common affairs, or in matters relating to yourselves;" but it seems an advance on that thought, as if *our Lord* had said, "Even though I had not so expressly drawn the consequence, yet, from the tenor of my doctrine and character, as well as from my miracles, you might have discerned, yourselves, that it must be a very wrong and very dangerous thing to reject and slight me."—Castalio and Grotius connect *this verse* with the *two following,* I think, without any reason.

[g] *Use your* utmost *endeavour to make up the affair with him.*] Theophylact intimates, and Salmasius, and after him, La Cene, largely insist upon it, that δος εργασιαν signifies "*Pay the interest,* as well as the principal of thy debt, in order to procure *deliverance.*" But Luke make use of another word [τοκος] for *usury* (Luke xix. 23), which I think a considerable argument for the common rendering, which is also more extensive.—Απαλλαχθαι signifies, not merely any kind of *deliverance,* but such an *agreement* as secures the defendant from any farther danger of *prosecution;* as *Elsner* accurately shews, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 237.—It is well known that αντιδικος properly signifies *a prosecutor,* or one who has *a suit at law* against another, whether in a civil or criminal case.

h The

he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

59 I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence till thou hast paid the very last mite.

on the way; lest he force thee before the judge, SECT. CXV.
and the judge, having found thee to be indeed accountable, *deliver thee to the* custody of the *serjeant, and the serjeant throw thee into prison.* Luke XII. 58.
It will not then be in thy power to compound 59
the matter upon gentler terms, or to get free from thy confinement; but *I tell thee* that, when he has thee at such an advantage, *thou shalt not* be able to *come out from thence till thou hast paid the very last mite* of the debt thou owest [h]. And thus if you are regardless of the proposals of God's mercy while the day of life and grace is continued, nothing is to be expected from the tribunal of his justice, but a severe sentence, which will end in everlasting confinement and punishment.

IMPROVEMENT.

To what a lamentable degree is human nature corrupted, that Ver. so noble a remedy as the *gospel*, so well adapted to the cure of a 49. malevolent and contentious disposition, should in so many instances only irritate the disease! and that a scheme so full of love and goodness, and so well suited to promote *peace* and harmony in those, who cordially embrace it, should be opposed with all the violence of persecution, and be the means of introducing strife and *division!*

How monstrous is it, that any should *hate their neighbours,* 51, 53 yea, and their nearest *relatives*, for that disinterested piety, and regard to conscience, which might recommend *strangers* to their esteem and affection! Yet let not those, who meet with such injurious treatment, be discouraged; knowing they have a *Father* and a *Saviour* in heaven, whose love is ten thousand times more than all: nor let others be offended, as if *Christianity* had been the occasion of more *evil* than *good;* for such is the nature of eternity, that the salvation of one immortal soul will be more than an equivalent for the greatest and most lasting temporal evils, which the greatest number of persons can suffer for conscience sake.

Let this awaken our *zeal to save souls*, however great and ter- 50 rible the sufferings are, to which it may expose us, in proportion to

h *The very last mite* of the debt thou owest.] The *mite* [λεπτον,] was the least valuable of their *coins* (see Mark xii. 42), containing no more than *half* of their least kind of *farthing*, or of their κοδραντης, or *quadrans;* which was itself but the *fourth part* of the *as*, or ασσαριον, or of the larger *farthing*, mentioned Mat. x. 29. and Luke xii. 6; so that *the mite* was but little more than the *third part* of an *English farthing*, and *a sparrow* was reckoned worth *four* of them.

SECT. CXV. to the *rage*, with which the enemy is endeavouring their *destruction*. May we be animated in it by the example of the blessed Luke XII. 50. *Jesus*, who, with a view to this, even *longed for those sufferings*, which innocent nature could not but regard as the object of strong aversion!

54, 56 May we at all times be so wise as to *discern* the evidences, and to comply with the purposes, of the *gospel*, else our *knowledge in natural things*, should it extend not only to the most common, but the most curious *appearances* on the *face of the earth* or *the heavens*, will turn to no other account but to shame and condemn us!

58 If we have any reason to fear that, through obstinate impenitence, the blessed *God* is still an *adversary* to us, let us make it our first and greatest care, that, by an humble submission of soul to him in the methods of his *gospel grace*, that strict scrutiny of his justice may be prevented, and that sentence of his wrath averted, which would otherwise plunge us into *endless ruin and misery*; for when could we pretend to have *paid the last farthing* of the debt of *ten thousand talents*, which we have been daily contracting, and which is charged to our account in the *book of his remembrance*.

END OF THE SIXTH VOLUME.

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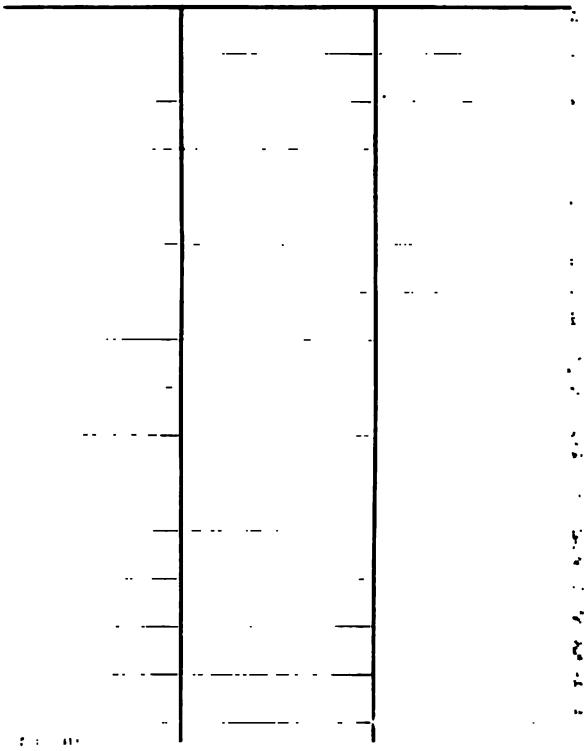
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